

THE
MONTHLY RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE.

VOL. XL.

AUGUST, 1868.

No. 2.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION.

The following Report on a subject vitally important to the Liberal Churches was read at the South Middlesex Conference, which met at Concord, June 18th. The subject called forth an animated discussion in the afternoon, but as no result was arrived at, and as many wished to speak who did not have the opportunity, the Resolutions and the whole subject were laid over for consideration at the next meeting of the Conference. Meanwhile, we have thought it best to print the Report and Resolutions, in the belief that they involve a subject of wide and profound interest. We have made a verbal alteration in the first resolution, in order to give it a more direct practical bearing.

THE subject selected by the Executive Committee of this Conference for consideration at this time is CHURCH ORGANIZATION. It is one which goes so directly to the life and prosperity of our religious societies that they deemed it important to obtain, as far as possible, the fruits of our past experience, and the wisest lessons and suggestions that come therefrom. They, therefore, committed the subject, with instructions to the Committee to put themselves in correspondence with the Churches of the Conference, and bring in a Report which should open the whole matter for discussion. The Committee have endeavored to discharge this duty, and now report to you the best results which they have been able to obtain.

We have received answers from twenty-two out of the twenty-six societies to which the circular was addressed, containing statements, and some of them suggestions, which we think of much practical value. In four of these societies there is no church organization distinct from the society itself.

In three others which have inherited a church organization and ordinances, the church has become gradually so merged in the congregation that the distinction becomes rather imperceptible and nearly obliterated, so that no roll of what are called "church-members" could probably be made in them. In the other fifteen societies reported the distinction exists. These have covenants and terms of admission. Among these, the largest reports one hundred and twenty-five members, one-third of its congregation; the smallest, fifteen members, one-fourth of its congregation. In these fifteen churches, fifty-seven members have been added during the past year, and one hundred and seventy-one within three years. Nearly all this growth, however, belongs to six of these churches, the other nine having had no additions, or very few, during the past three years.

The fifteen churches reported which have a distinct roll of members admitted by covenant number in all eight hundred and sixty members. The larger and more growing churches include one-third of the adult portion of the congregation. In the others the relative numbers vary from one-fourth to one-tenth of the congregation.

The facts which have been communicated, therefore, would sum up as follows: Of the twenty-two societies reported, seven have either no distinct church organization, or one which is becoming merged in the congregation and identified with it. Five of these seven have the communion service and value it, from one-fourth to one-half of the congregations joining in it. One reports the whole congregation, meaning, we presume, the adult portion. Two of them omit it altogether.

Of the fifteen societies which have separate and distinct church organizations, with covenants and terms of membership, six of the churches in them are on the increase. The other nine of these fifteen churches are decreasing as distinct churches, tending manifestly to final immersing in the congregations; so that there are only six churches in the conference out of the twenty-two reported which seem as such to be growing ones, judging from the admissions of the last three years.

Questions of the utmost gravity cannot but urge themselves upon our attention. You must see from this brief recital that our system of church organization, as it now exists and operates, is not giving us generally any results with which we ought to be satisfied. Probably in not more than one-half of the churches of our conference is the system working so as to promise even to perpetuate itself. Shall we give it up, and say that it does not belong to our polity, and that its day is passed? Four of our letters say, Yes; merge it in the congregation. Let the society itself be the church, and do not keep up the distinction any longer. Others are perplexed and doubtful. They are not ready to give it up, and yet they do not know what to do with it. "As now existing," says one of our letters, "it seems in many cases, as with us, to have no office and no influence." "I walk by faith, or rather by hope," says another, who seems utterly dissatisfied with the present state of things, but not seeing the way out. "I confess the whole subject is perplexing and unsettled with me," says another, "though I have thought much of it." Most of the letters, however, earnestly and emphatically discourage anything like a surrender of the church, as such. This is the case always where it is comparatively flourishing and enlarging its numbers. "Entering the church," says one of our letters, "is a step which makes religion cease to be passive, and becomes an active, personal power," and "the sense of responsibility is greatly increased by church-membership." "I should not," says another, "be willing to merge the church and society in one. I should fear a religious déclension and weakness as the result." Another writes, where there is no church in the society, that he deplores the fact, and says, "We must have a separate church and living body; without such an element, a parish will soon become a mere aggregation of curious listeners." Another writes, "The experience of more than thirty years assures me that without a separate living organization, clearly defined and emphatic, no society can be permanently prosperous. The church sustains a relation to the congregation somewhat like that which the family sustains to society. It should be the home of humanity." This, in-

deed, is the prevailing tone of the letters which we have received.

But we hope it does not need any argument to show that no organization ever ought to be kept up which cannot be made receptive of the Divine Life and inspiration, and which the Divine Providence does not own and bless as its instrumentality. No Christian society has any right to ask its minister to spend his strength in that most vexing and demoralizing of all task-work, trying to galvanize the dead bodies which they have done their utmost to make such. Either the church ought to be alive, and the society by general sympathy and co-operation ought to live in it and make it instinct with their best energies, or else it ought to be removed as a corpse that cumbers the ground. And now the question comes, Which of these two things shall be done ?

The Committee agree entirely with those of our correspondents who think that the question of church or no church resolves itself ultimately into the question of a society or no society. It will be found, after all, that differences of opinion on this subject are more specious than real. It will be found, we think, generally, that where there is no church distinctively organized, there is something exceptional in the circumstances of the case. If there is much life there, the society may be newly gathered or entirely homogeneous, or it may be gathered around some minister of popular gifts, and its relations merely personal. But in almost every society a portion of the congregation are floating and foreign, having no personal interest in the society, bound to it by no personal tie, and never intending to be. If we mean by a church only the permanent and reliable members of a society, such as you can organize for work, always knowing where to find them, we have already made a distinction in the congregation, and a pretty decisive one, too. Will you organize the society for Christian work, and leave out the transient element till you can make it permanent ? Unless we do this, we have nothing but a chance collection of people who come together for no other purpose than to hear somebody speak, who will come so long as they like the speaking, and go some-

where else when they do not. We have no element of permanence ; for when the popular speaker dies or goes somewhere else, the people disperse, and that is the end of the matter till they find another. For anything permanent, we must organize, and we must organize around something besides preachers. We may organize as a Howard Benevolent Society, but that is not a church ; as a temperance society, but that is not a church. When we organize around Jesus Christ and his word for the purpose of being made Christ-like, and extending the power of his gospel through society, then we become a church and all benevolent societies in one,— a church too distinct from that portion of the congregation which is accidental or floating, or which has no sympathy with our main object. The distinction comes again between church and congregation, and the only way to get rid of it is to shut the church-doors, and bar them against all comers who will not be doers of the word as well as hearers ; and then you have the distinction between saints and sinners more exclusive and preposterous than Calvinism ever dreamed of.

Convert the congregation into the church as fast as you please ; draw them into a consecration to its sublime ends as entire as possible ; but the idea that a Christian society must do nothing unless it can enlist every man and woman that comes to meeting, would be to die out through inefficiency and inaction. But all this absurdity is involved in the doctrine that there must be no distinction between church and congregation,— as if there were no outsiders to be won, no sinners to be converted, no men and women devoted to self and the world to be drawn into the self-devotion of a Christian calling. We take it, then, that the question demonstrates itself that if we are to have anything but a chance gathering of people who come together as mere hearers, to be dissolved as such again, we must organize a society within the congregation, and that society must have the functions and do the work of a church of Christ. If the whole end of a church was reached and accomplished merely by keeping up one of its sacraments, then we might merge it in the congregation, for we should only have to display the elements and ask everybody to come

and partake of them. But how false and absurd the notion that we become a church merely by coming together to eat a piece of bread or sip a little wine ! That may be a very profitable rite, or it may not. Of this by and by. But that is not what a church is constituted for, any more than it is for singing hymns or reading prayers. Singing hymns, if well done, is a very good thing, but we need not organize a church to do that. Celebrating our Lord's life and death by these memorials may be a good thing, but we need not organize a church for that. A church may dispense with them altogether, if it chooses to do so ; and any number of persons who are not a church can use these memorials if they find in them comfort and edification, and who shall hinder them ? A church is a body which is organized for doing something ; but it cannot do anything with force, efficiency, and method unless it has a covenant, and terms of membership, for what is a covenant but a constitution ? There are responsibilities to be borne, votes to be taken, officers to be chosen, moneys to be raised, funds to be held in trust, and disbursements to be made, and how is all this to be done without a covenant and terms of admission and membership ? And how clear it is that all this will not be done at all, or only in a very loose and shiftless way, without some compact that brings its members into active co-operation ; and that as with the human body, so with the ecclesiastical, when compactly and strongly organized, it wields its forces with skill and energy ; when disjointed, loose, and unorganized, it is feeble and inefficient, and tends to dissolution.

But, in order to get a full grasp of this subject, let us inquire what is the work of a Christian church ? how is it to be done ? and how is it to imbibe life, strength, and inspiration for doing it ? In brief, what should be its *duties*, its *officers*, and its *rituals* ?

1. First, then, we should say it is the prime duty of a Christian church to diffuse through the parish and through society around it a warm sphere of Christian sympathy and love. Look through our parishes, and especially our country parishes, and see how urgent this duty is ; how families are kept

apart in social reserve and isolation, and how our Unitarianism often freezes down into the stiffest and the primest of all the religions of the earth. But under all this cold exterior human life has its secret and tragic ongoingings. Hearts there are with yearnings and aspirations which they would breathe into some friendly ear. Families there are without social privilege, isolated in their solitary homes, and hungering for human love. Homes there are which death has passed through, where neighbors never came with Christian comforts and consolations. Men and women are suffering and dying, sometimes where the sorest need is, — not medicines and creature comforts, but some breast on which to lean with trust and confidence, and pour out the hopes and fears and doubts and sorrows of our common humanity, when sinking and breaking. How many instances have we known when, in these trial hours of faith and hope, persons have sent from ours into other communions for some father or mother confessor with whom to unburden their sins and doubts and troubles, and be borne up in their transit to immortality. Often it is true of the hardest and most sinful man, who all his life has shed sermons as an iron-clad sheds musket balls, —

“ On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries ;
E'en in our ashes live her wonted fires.”

Strangers, too, come into our parishes and places of worship, pretty sure, however, to drop off and go somewhere else, if they find there no sphere of hospitality, and are only curiously looked at from a distance. Do you say we have only outlined here the sphere of a minister's pastoral walks and duties ? His sphere is undoubtedly here, but he will work in it with very little purpose unless there is a Christian church in it too, so warmed and penetrated with the love of Christ and the Holy Spirit that it can melt down the snow-drifts that keep hearts and minds apart from each other, and fold them in an atmosphere of Christian sympathy and fellowship.

Well, how is this to be done ? Why, organize for this very

purpose. There is an office still kept up, but becoming obsolete, called the office of deacon. It once had important and active duties, but they have now become narrowed down in most cases to the distribution of the elements on communion days. The office has been filled and honored by some of the worthiest names in New England, and adorned by the most sterling Christian virtues. Within the sphere of our personal knowledge this has almost uniformly been the case. But what is the use of trying to keep it up when its appropriate functions have become nearly obsolete? We would abolish the name and the office as now constituted, but we would revive its ancient and appropriate function, clothe it with all its honors, and breathe into it all possible life and energy. Instead of two, we would have seven the apostolic number, and four of them at least should be women. How many are the instances where, in adaptation and tenderness, and intuitive perception of the sorest needs of human nature, the sympathies of one Christian woman are worth all the men in the parish, the minister included. We might call this board by any name that described its duties: Church Wardens, Standing Committee, or, as one society in this conference has done already, *the Committee on Pastoral Aid*. That seems to us to describe its functions exactly, and one of our churches most efficiently organized has adopted both the measure and the name.

There is another interest which is specially committed to a Christian church, or which ought to be, which the Master himself trusted to it in the beginning, when he charged them, "Feed my lambs." What possible reason is there why this great matter of Christian education should be an accidental and outside business,—an adjunct of the society, and not an interest involved in its most vital and central organism? If a town, in its corporate capacity, commits the secular education of its children to faithful hands, and holds them responsible, what reason is there why a Christian church, as such, should not commit to faithful hands the Christian education of every child in the parish, and cherish and watch over it? Why should it not have its committee on Christian nurture,

who shall see to it that there is no neglected child in the parish or in the town, but who shall seek them out, win them to the school, and keep them there ; help the teacher and the superintendent, and be teachers themselves when needed ; provide for the amusements of the children, the festivals and the religious reading ; raise the funds for it, and make their stated report ? That done, teachers and superintendents would no longer be discouraged, and Sunday-schools would no longer languish.

But a Christian church has interests out of and beyond itself. It is an aggressive power in the world, if it is anything. Unless the life and spirit of the Church universal shall throb warmly through it, it will be likely to become a dead member of the body of Christ, to be sundered from it and drop away. In the grand work of human progress, enlightenment, and Christianization, each one will have its duty to perform, however humble ; for it is true of a church as an individual, that it receives only as it gives. It should have, therefore, its board of charities, authorized and acting in its name. And then, when a good cause asked for aid which a church could render, individuals would not be subjected to the necessity, sometimes a very painful one, of begging it from door to door in their own name. They would come only to take what the church had taxed itself to give, and then it would be a charity which blessed the giver, because it would be spontaneous and flowing free.

Such, it seems to us, are the duties of a Christian church, indicating to some extent how it should be organized, and what officers it should have. It should have at least three boards of officers : one on pastoral aid, one on Christian education, and one on Christian charities, and they should contain women as well as men. As already intimated, there is one church in the conference efficiently organized, on such a plan as this, and one or two others, we believe, which are making approximations towards it. And a church organized in this way must meet statedly, and meet for practical ends. If in earnest to do its work, it will come together to hear the reports of its committees, reappoint them, and hold them to

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their responsibilities. And thus the members will be brought into practical relations with each other and with society about them, and this terrible isolation of our extreme individualism would be done with.

But a most important question remains. A church, as one correspondent says, should be "the home of humanity." It should be drawn towards its Divine Centre in such communion and correspondence that its charities and all its works will have the inspiration of his life and joy. Otherwise they will be dead works, and not the spontaneous forthgoing of the spiritual life. How, then, may a church be brought into such direct and loving relations with Jesus Christ as its mediatorial centre that the divine spirit and life through him may be breathed into it, and inspire all its functions? We come here to a large subject, for all prayer and preaching truly such; all self-application of Christian truth, all the influence of the Holy Spirit by whatever agency, are means of this divine grace to a church and all its members. But, from the nature of our subject, it lies upon us to consider the two ordinances which are regarded as its peculiar sacraments, — the communion service, called the Lord's Supper, and Baptism. As we have already shown, these rituals are not essentials of a Christian church. It may exist without them or with them, and therefore these should by no means be made *obligatory* upon all church-members, or upon any one who cannot use them with pleasure or edification. We apprehend, however, that when they are used so as to unfold all their significance, this matter will take care of itself, and that the question will not be who are willing to come? but who are willing to keep away?

Can it be possible, does it look very likely, that a sacrament like the Lord's Supper, around which Christian devotion for eighteen hundred years has kindled its holiest fires, through which our fathers and mothers went up to heaven as the nearest way, which has been the most cherished rite in that home of humanity which the soul yearns to find atlast, — does it look likely that, after all, it is without significance and a failure? And if we have missed of finding the significance, is it more

likely that the fault is in it, or in us, that we have bungled with it, and so missed its resources of wealth and power?

First, unquestionably, is presupposed a very warm and earnest faith in the Christ and his gospel as a most important mediation of the divine atonement and grace. But this faith need not be a very technical or theological one, and what thousands and millions have had blessing and comfort in the communion service who had settled no vexed questions of this sort!

But this faith being presupposed, we think this service ought to be one by itself, one which absorbs the chief interest of the day when it occurs,—never sandwiched in between two other services, and there hurried over. It should have preparation and time and scope for the affections and devotions of the believer to flow into it and linger there. In the exercises which belong to it, it seems to us that the first need is a hymnology which is worthy of the service,—full of the glow and inspiration of the Christ himself. And here we have been sadly lacking. Some of our hymn-books on this head now in use are poor and meagre. With the mind and heart of the church itself attuned and lyrical with the love of Christ, and with hymns and songs which are worthy of the theme, our experience is that there is no form of worship into which the divine influx descends with more searching and subduing power, or melts down the heart into such heavenly tenderness, as the communion service. This, more than any special command, convinces us that it is of divine appointment. Some years ago, at one of the morning conferences of anniversary week, the meeting came to a pause, when a sweet voice broke out in the words,—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall!"

in which the whole congregation joined as if struck by a sudden breeze, which quivered through every heart and moistened in every eye, and seemed the very presence of the Lord. Going home and looking up this coronation hymn for communion service, you would find it in one of the singing-books of the choir, where some wise tinker has tried his hand at spoil-

ing it, and perfectly succeeded, — cutting out the word Jesus, and substituting something else; wiser than Saint Paul, whose language furnishes the hymn with its idea, and strikes its key-note; wiser than they are up in heaven, as St. John reports its ritual, who, looking up through the ranks of the four and twenty elders who cast their crowns, and seeking for that which inspired their homage, their harpings and hallelujahs, see *a Lamb as it had been slain*.

It has seemed to us, as to some of the correspondents of the Committee, that our communion service is too apt to take a melancholy tone. Some of the hymns used dwell so exclusively or prominently on the physical sufferings and death of Christ that they seem to bring us to his funeral rather than his coronation. The whole idea of the service is redemption, feeding on Christ and triumph over sin and over the grave; its thought cheerful and joyous, tender but never sad, urging to thorough self-examinations, but at the same time inspiring the notes of conquest and victory.

A richly inspired hymnology to draw from, not once through a service hurried over, but frequently and with the whole church breathing their souls and voices into it, would tend to make the service itself more rich and life-giving than any service which we have; and this some of our correspondents tell us they have found in their own experience.

Then we like exceedingly another suggestion found in one of our letters. A liturgy fixed and ever to be repeated, we should deprecate. But it does seem to us that some of the heavenly utterances of the New Testament, congenial with the occasion, read by the minister and the church in alternation, would draw them both together into its spirit. What liturgy could furnish anything to be used in this way so good as that wonderful discourse of our Saviour uttered immediately after the miracle of the loaves, describing the bread which comes down from heaven, whereof if one eat, he shall never hunger more. Indeed, the grand old prophecies, where Christ is foreshown, joined with the scenes, events, and discourses where they are fulfilled, well selected and arranged and used in this way, would be the best liturgy we could have;

always flexible to the occasion, furnishing forms for the soul to flow into, but never lying upon it as fixed and stale. Something would remain dependent upon the minister; but with his faith in it, and his heart in it, and under such conditions as we have described, the service must be what it has been throughout the Christian centuries,—a form of worship which has been most signally owned and blessed by the Spirit of God, in which the Spirit of the risen Christ has been almost visibly brought nigh.

There is another suggestion found in one of the letters which strikes us with very great force. The communion service should not be made so common as to be a routine. It should be reserved and looked forward to as the most delightful of all festivals. One every month seems to us too frequent. In Germany, says the correspondent referred to, they have it only three times a year,—at the time of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday; commemorating those occasions severally, and being filled and inspired with their idea. If we add one more occasion,—All-Saints' day, commemorative of those who may have recently passed on, to keep their memory green, as of the glorified saints and martyrs, and all the dead who one communion make, under Jesus Christ, the chief Martyr and Witness, by whom they are gathered in one great and goodly fellowship,—we should then have four of these festivals annually, distributed not very unequally throughout the year, each of them coming inspired with some great truth of Christianity, and rich with historic associations. And we might fill up the unequal intervals with two others as we pleased, so as to have six in course of the year, which is the usual number now in our liberal churches. In this way we should avoid the baldness and the nakedness of the service as now held, and provide forms for the Holy Spirit to flow into and fill to overflowing and clothe with divine beauty and grace.

And we can see no reason in the world why on some of these occasions—say Christmas, or Easter, or both—the usual communion should not be followed by another communion, where all the members come together in the freedom of

social intercourse, in a love feast such as it was in the beginning and always meant to be, where the tone of the meeting shall be religious but at the same time social and joyous and free ; where the prayer shall be breathed and the most inspiring hymns shall be sung, but where heart meets heart, and all meet God and his Christ ; where the humblest member, otherwise isolated and deprived of social privilege, shall find it in richer and ampler measure than the world can ever furnish. The church, truly constituted, levels all our artificial distinctions within her enclosure, and makes the lowliest the peer of the highest, because it brings both to a consciousness of a birthright and an inheritance which cast dimness on all our worldly pomps. Outside of it we have all of us our clans and cliques, and the strut and strife of our social ambitions and rivalries, and we suppose must have ; but it has ever been the glory of the Church, even when most hierarchical, that these distinctions vanish the moment you get within her pale. Indeed, our sectarian divisions very often are quite as much social as religious, and it is sometimes curious to see how they cleave society almost exactly by a horizontal line, according to affinities of taste and culture, and not the affinities of religious sentiment and belief. In the most ancient communions the religious element is so strong that it overrides and subordinates the social, so far as regards the Church. In some of our communions the religious element is so weak that the social overrides and subordinates it ; and hence, with the talk of liberality and comprehension on our lips, we split up into little cliques and divisions ; while the ancient Church, with no such profession of liberality, has more comprehension a thousand times, taking all ranks to her bosom like a tender mother, and, as a church, knowing no difference between the king on his throne and the beggar at the foot of it, since all become princely and royal at her hands. It is from the Catholic Church that the song comes to us, claiming the same titles for peasant and lord, —

“ Are we not princes ? We who stand
As heirs beside the throne ?
We who can call the promised land
Our heritage, our own,

And answer to no less command
Than God's, and his alone?

"Are we not kings? Both night and day,
From early until late,
About our bed, about our way,
A guard of angels wait.
And so we watch and work and pray
In more than royal state."

Not till the religious element is strong enough to subordinate the social, so far as the Church is concerned,—not till our ministry to the poor is within our cathedrals, rather than chapels built away off outside, filling up these dreadful gaps and blank spaces in the pews by living humanity, redeemed and made royal by Christ,—not, in fine, till we have a *communion* of souls, shall we become a church liberal and catholic in fact as well as name.

We have left ourselves little time to say anything of the other sacrament retained by the Protestant churches,—that of baptism,—and we must dismiss it with a passing notice. It is not peculiar to Christianity. There is hardly a religion worthy of the name which has not discerned to some extent its spiritual analogies. But under our liberal Christianity it seems to us to be burdened with a peculiar significance. It means regeneration, and that every human being is capable of it, and is to be nurtured for it. It makes human birth to be sacred, recognizing in every child the immortal nature waiting there for the new birth that is to be. It says to the parent, Your babe comes into this world not as an animal comes; but within that fleshly nature white wings are folded up, to expand for a heavenly flight. When kept true to its significance, the rite has a vast educative power, for it keeps a great truth ever preaching anew to the little ones, in language which they can best understand,—the language of natural symbols. It impresses on every child in the congregation the worth and dignity of a spiritual birthright, for it makes them children of the Church, born in it, belonging to it, to be nurtured in it and for it, not to be thrown over the wall and abandoned to the world and the devil. In a sensualizing world, and a materializing age, tending to sink all

truth into flesh and sense, and swamp it there, no one can tell to what extent this beautiful symbolization has kept alive the idea of the child's spiritual nature and the responsibilities that belong to it. True, the rite is not essential. Neither are our burial rites essential. We might shovel a human being into the grave, as we would an animal, without prayer or ritual, and we confess would as soon give up one extremity of human life as the other to this dreary nakedness and desolation. We would as soon have our exit out of this world as our ingress into made without any recognition of our immortal nature. But the Church has ordained, wisely, we think, that the bow of heavenly hope and promise shall rest on both of our life's extremes, spanning our whole existence from the cradle to the grave, and flinging its richest colors over all the space that lies between. Such is our idea of the Church, its offices, and its rituals.

The evils of which some of our correspondents complain result partly, we think, from the fact that most of the churches in this conference were formerly Puritan, and that they have inherited Puritan forms and methods without Puritan ideas. It is the new cloth upon the old garment. People came into the Puritan churches through some mysterious and miraculous conversion and experience which could be dated from. They were presumed to grow up outside, children of the devil, but wrenched suddenly out of his hands and brought to Christ. So if you ask people now to join the church, people who ought to be up and doing its work, they will say, perhaps, "Oh, we are not good enough; or we are unworthy; or we can be good without; or we have not met with the requisite change; or we dislike a profession of religion." Ministers who try to make the Church a practical force in society have heard all this, we presume, till they are tired. The answer to it is very clear and very short. Here is work to be done, social, educational, and humane, and we know it will not be done unless we organize to do it, or, at least, loosely and poorly done. Perhaps we can all go to heaven without doing it; but there was One who said of neglected opportunity, "Because ye did it not to one of the least of

those, ye did it not to me." It were very much as if the Levite had said, when he passed over on the other side, " Oh, I am not good enough to pick that man up and pour oil and wine into his wounds. I think I can get to heaven without ; or I shall be making a profession of goodness, I fear, if I do." And so he passes on. We hope, as the subject unfolds from our point of view, that all this logic appears in its true light and vanishes clean out of the way, and that if ever our Unitarian churches are to be placed on the Rock of ages, it will be when we have done with selfish individualism, and organized them, and consecrated them to ends so Christian and humane that the Christ will come into them and fill them with himself, and go thence for the redemption of the world.

One thought more, which vitally concerns us as a denomination. It becomes plainer every day that our liberal Christianity is to be one of two things : We can stick to our individualism, have our preachings, our hearings, and our conferences, and our literature, and be an *influence*, and a very important one, doubtless, to act upon other denominations, to modify them and liberalize them ; and, that done, dissolve in the currents of the age, and be absorbed thence into other churches better organized than we are. If we are to be anything more than this, we must be a church ourselves, where the young generations, as they are coming on, will find a home for their deepest yearnings and their best thoughts, and whence their highest activities may radiate. Our National Conference would have been little else than a council of the larger churches meeting for big talk, unless it had the local conferences for its constituencies and its ground-work. But we are not organized yet. What are the local conferences without churches for their constituencies which are integers of a larger whole, organisms fitted to receive life and give it out again ? We cannot begin at the top and organize down. We must begin at the foundation and organize up, else we are nothing but a castle in the air. But we have not come to the foundation till we come to the individual churches to be made the living body of Christ himself. For near half a century we have been forming new churches while others have

been dying out, and so Unitarianism has been leaking out at the bottom almost as fast as they pour it in at the top. Let us go home and stop the leak, organize the churches where we belong, every one of us responsible that they shall be live stones in the building. Let this be done in every local conference of the denomination, and then the national conference would have life breathed into it from all the members, and send life back to the remotest extremities. Till then, we are only a heap of fragments which other denominations will pick up and appropriate. But that done, and done in the spirit and love of Christ, we are "whole as the marble, founded as the rock, and broad and general as the casing air."*

We offer the following resolutions for the consideration of the conference:—

Resolved, 1. That a Christian church, organizing the congregation with covenant and terms of membership, is essential to the life, growth, and permanence of a religious society.

2. That a church, truly such, should be organized for Christian work, and that to this end it should have at least three boards of officers, — one on pastoral aid, one on Christian nurture, and one on charities, to report stately to the church; and that both sexes should be represented thereon.

3. That the church should be kept in living relations with Jesus Christ, as offered in the revelation of the New Testament, and to this end the communion service should be enlarged and set apart, its ritual inspired with the best hymns and by the most active participation of the communicants in the service.

4. That the church is not only a religious but social institution, and as such ought to be the home centre for common sympathies and a common fellowship, and that times and occasions should be had where this idea may be practically and fully realized.

5. That a collection of hymns and songs, especially adapted to the communion service and to all social gatherings of the church, is an urgent necessity, essential to the highest inspiration of the church itself and the sweetest communion of the social hour.

6. That the church is the birthright of the children, and they should be born in it and nurtured for it, and not left outside of it to grow up for conversion, or to be ensnared and corrupted by the world.

EDMUND H. SEARS,
S. B. FLAGG,
ABBY M. MARSHALL,
ELLEN T. EMERSON, } Committee.

* This paragraph was added by the Chairman after the Committee had signed the report.

THE BUD AND THE BLOSSOM.

BY GEO. H. HEPWORTH.

'TWAS a new gift from God :
 That very morn, within those restless eyes
 The playful light first stole, and painted there
 The mother's face. But yester eve were clasped
 Round angel-necks those dimpled hands ; those lips
 Farewells to angels spoke ; and in the fields
 Of heaven it played, a fairer bud than those
 It plucked. But when the glad sun woke the flowers
 Of earth anew, and dried the tears which night
 Had shed, — sad, weary night, who wanders round
 The earth, with but a coronet of stars
 To light her lonely way, — those little arms
 Entwined a mother's neck ; that little form
 Nestled within a mother's warm embrace ;
 And she, with joy so deep it seemed like woe,
 Could only cry, "Thy gift, O God ! is good !"

And, lest the secrets of that world it should
 Reveal, from whence it came ; or, counting o'er
 The never-ceasing, ever-changing joys
 Of angel-homes, should weary us with this
 Dull life of earth, God sealed its little lips.
 Nor will he break the spell until the past
 Is all forgot ; then will it lisp her name
 Who loves it best, and live these years of ours content.

Bright visions of the future filled
 With tears that mother's eyes, — such tears as come
 When human hearts are crowded full of heaven.
 She saw his noble brow crowned with the crown
 Of manly strength ; his watchful eye fixed on
 The eternal right ; his iron hand, softer
 Than any girl's when touching what was loved,
 Grasping the heavy sword, and dealing blows
 So hard, that Wrong, all covered o'er with wounds,
 Should steal away, and hide his hideous head
 Within the shadow of defeat and death.

As fall and rise the tides of inland seas
When Luna, with bewitching grace, reins in
Her panting steeds, and, bending o'er her chariot-side,
Views her own face within the glassy depths,
So heaved that mother's bosom, as, within,
The tidal wave of joy now rose, now fell,
While o'er her life there hung this vision of
The years to come.

But evening came, and changed
It all. The bud had withered on the stem
Ere twice the sun had kissed its ruddy cheeks :
The babe had died upon the mother's breast.
She pressed it hard against her heart ; but clay
Cannot be warmed to life, when once the soul
Has fled, e'en by a mother's holy love.

As, in the storm, the wild waves dash their spray
So high, that, from the o'erhanging cliff, it tears
The flowers, and leaves the bare and blackened rock,
So dashed the waves of sudden woe against
That stricken soul, and threw their tearful spray
So high, it tore the vision down, and left
But sullen clouds of dread and doubt. Then God,
Whose wont it is to paint upon the sky
That blackest seems his bow of brightest hope,
Spoke to her heart : "*I give, but never take.*
'Twas thine to-day ; 'tis thine for evermore.
Too frail a bud, perchance, it was to bear
The chilling blasts of life ; but, christened with
Thy name, it shall be known in heaven, and thee
It never shall forget. As to the rose
The perfume clings, so clings thy angel-child
To thee ; and ever and anon, drawn by
Its earthly love, 'twill seek the utmost verge
Of heaven, and, gazing towards thy home and thee,
Will wonder why you wait so long on earth.
Rise from your tears, and see how much your grief
Has blessed your life."

You drink from shallow springs,
When all your years run gayly by. But bend

Upon your knees, scoop out a little grave,
And lay therein some fragile piece of clay,
In love of which you lost yourself, so dear
It was : then will you know that mother you
Are not until you have a child in heaven ;
Nor know you all a mother's sacred joy
Until your hand upon your trembling heart
In holy trust you lay, and, looking up
To heaven, you cry, " "Twas here it budded, but
It blossoms there."

HYMN.

God of the ocean, earth, and sky !
In thy bright presence we rejoice ;
We feel thee, see thee ever nigh ;
We ever hear thy gracious voice.

We feel thee in the sunny beam ;
We see thee walk the mountain waves ;
We hear thee in the murmuring stream,
And when the midnight tempest raves.

God on the lonely hills we meet ;
God in the valley and the grove ;
While birds and whispering winds repeat
That God is there, — that God is Love !

We meet thee in the silent hour,
When wearied Nature sinks to rest,
When dies the breeze, and sleeps the flower,
And peace is given to every breast.

We see thee when, at eve, afar
We upward lift our wondering sight, —
We see thee in each glittering star
That beautifies the gloom of night.

But better still, and still more clear,
Thee, in the sacred page we see ;
There thy own glorious words we hear,
And learn the way to heaven and thee.

THE TREE AND ITS FRUITS.

BY REV. W. SILSBEE.

CAN we be helped in ascertaining the truth, by observing the lives of those who profess to have attained to the truth? Our Lord seems to have answered this question when he said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." He declares this to be the test by which to distinguish the false prophet from the true. "Every tree is known by his own fruit." You cannot gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. There is a natural impossibility that a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit. The true doctrine must be manifested in a good life. Error must have a natural tendency to beget an evil life. From the life, then, we should be able to judge between truth and error. No argument should seem so conclusive as character, in determining which of the various forms of doctrine submitted for our acceptance is the true one.

Have we, then, misunderstood the meaning of our Lord's words? Or why is it that the Christian world has not profited more by this divine lesson? Certainly it would seem as though this test had very seldom been practically applied. How few of the vast multitude that have been engaged in religious controversies have been willing to accept a good life as the criterion of sound doctrine! How little has the cause of charity been advanced by a method which would seem peculiarly adapted to suppress all bigotry and uncharitableness! Men may emulate one another in the pursuit of good works, but they will not *quarrel* for the foremost places; and more than once it has been remarked that all persecution and intolerance would cease, were men as eager to show their Christian discipleship by the test which the Lord gives as they are to appeal to mere intellectual arguments, to prejudice, and to excited passion. "I will show thee my faith by my works"—why does not this settle the question, whose faith is the purest? In theory, at least, it seems a very simple matter. The machine which does the most work and the best work, we pronounce to be most worthy of employment.

The tree which bears the most abundant fruit and of the finest quality is at once preferred before all others. We only ask for the *facts* in such cases, and when they are obtained, we have no further doubt. Why has not this simple method been pursued in the settlement of religious controversies, and why are these controversies still so bitterly and fiercely waged?

It might exceed our present limits to attempt anything like a full answer to the latter of these two questions. But as to the former, we must not forget that men have often professed to employ our Lord's rule; and, since their success was no greater, we must conclude either that they were not quite sincere in their profession, or else that some grave, practical difficulties are encountered in the application of the rule. Before all, however, we must recall with gratitude the many instances where the argument from life to truth has convinced the most prejudiced and obstinate of unbelievers, has broken down the most violent bigotry, has turned hatred into the warmest admiration and love. Who shall tell how many thousands the saints have converted simply by their sanctity? Nay, even the "Lives" of the saints (though not always of the canonized), the mere printed record of their holy deeds, must have led many to inquire whether the faith which animated such men was not in all essential respects from God. When "the books" shall be "opened," it will doubtless appear that the Cross has won its most glorious triumphs through the silent and unconscious influence of those whose lives gave evidence that they "had been with Jesus." Heathen antiquity could not help exclaiming, "See how these Christians love one another!" Even our own "stoic of the woods" could not withhold his admiration of those Christian missionaries whose fortitude was more heroic than he himself could boast, and whose love infinitely surpassed all that he could conceive. In the highest or the lowest culture the question is alike suggested, What is it that makes these men what they are? What is the secret of this patience, constancy, cheerfulness, courage, this unwearied benevolence, this invincible hope, this universal sympathy, this trust in a Divine

Providence? Cannot we learn it too? Is not this the true Christian whose life seems so nearly an "imitation of Christ"?

But that holiest Example is itself by far the highest instance of the rule he gave. The character of Christ has confessedly been of all miracles the most difficult to be explained away. "Truly, this was the Son of God!" No other name suffices to account for his absolutely sinless life. "Since the world began" it was never heard, till he came, that any one in the form of a man was wholly without guile or sin. Those who have believed little else in the Gospels have been constrained to admit the reality and divinity of his life. Only such a reality, it was felt, could account for the existence and power of the Christian religion. And how inevitable the inference, in all unsophisticated minds, from the divinity of the life to the divinity of the doctrine! What but the Spirit of truth could dwell in him who "did always those things that were pleasing to" God? Accordingly, it was with perfect justice he said, "The works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me;" meaning by "works" not merely those acts called especially miraculous, but every word and deed that proceeded from him during his whole life on earth. And nothing in the divine plan of redemption more admirably manifests the infinite wisdom than the dependence of our faith on the *person* of Christ, rather than on any arguments or reasonings drawn from the essential nature of the truth. Around *Him* have gathered from age to age the vast multitude who would be fed by "the bread which came down from heaven." They have simply trusted in and verified his own words: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

In other ways, too, men have to some extent endeavored to judge of the doctrine by its fruits. Christian civilization has been often urged as an argument for the Christian religion. The superiority of Protestant countries to Catholic in respect to education, morality, political freedom, progress in the arts and sciences, and religious liberty, seems, to Protestants, an unquestionable proof of the superior purity of their Christian

faith. Within the Protestant Church, also, a similar comparison is sometimes instituted between the various sects or subdivisions of sects. Every sect probably *claims* that its own peculiarities are specially adapted to produce the fruits of righteousness; for though some may lay far more stress than others on "good works" as a requisite for heaven, there is none that would not admit that purity of doctrine should result in purity of life. And at last we come down to individual men and women, whose daily life, it is asserted, bears conclusive testimony to the soundness of the doctrines which they maintain. How can error lead to such admirable heroism, fortitude, humanity, temperance, and justice? If these are not Christians, how can Christianity be worth anything? Are we driven to the conclusion that there is a higher than Christianity?

Now, whatever be the view we take of this principle, "by their fruits ye shall know them," it is clear, when we come to make comparisons of this kind, that there is room for the exercise of the largest charity. Not only the Christian religion, in nearly every form of it, has boasted its saints and martyrs, but other religions, Mahometan and Oriental, as well; and few are found so bigoted as to deny that there are "in every nation" and in every creed those "that fear God and work righteousness." It cannot harm the cause of truth to make this admission in the most unqualified manner. At the same time we cannot but see that the fact here confessed makes it more difficult practically to apply our Lord's rule, and even tempts us to doubt the real influence of truth upon life. Indeed, there seem to be two main reasons why it is so hard to judge a doctrine by its fruits, or rather why more are not convinced by the application of this test. The first is, that men are not agreed in their *estimate* of the "fruits." The second is, that it is not easy always to trace a man's moral and spiritual condition to the doctrines he believes; in other words, we cannot easily tell where the fruits *came from*.

1. The first may be illustrated by the comparison so often made between Catholic and Protestant countries. "See!" exclaims the Protestant, "your religion, wherever it prevails,

encourages superstition and priestcraft, and abject submission of the multitude to spiritual authority. Romanism depresses the arts, frowns upon the sciences, will not allow a free literature, tolerates no independent inquiry in religion. It keeps the people ignorant and poor and debased. You may know a Catholic province as soon as you enter it, by the lack of all improvements, by the slovenly and idle ways of its inhabitants, by the prevalence of superstitious rites and usages, by the multiplication of shrines and temples and ministers of religion, and at the same time by the deplorable absence of whatever can subserve the best interests of man, whether for time or for eternity. Are not these facts perfectly patent and undeniable? How can a religion which bears such fruits be 'the one holy Catholic and apostolic faith'?" "You are utterly incapable of judging," the Catholic may retort, "because you have lost the true standard and measure to judge by. Your Protestant bias has distorted your vision. What you boast as liberty, we call license and unbelief. What you deride as superstition in us, we call reverence. Submission to authority—provided it be that *true* authority which the Catholic Church claims—is wholesome for the soul, and helps to lift it nearer to God. Such authority must be paramount to all earthly government. To win men over to this allegiance, and to keep them in it, is an end infinitely superior to any mere secular considerations; and hence Catholicism seems comparatively indifferent to men's bodies, only because it has supreme regard to their souls. Moreover, in spite of your assertion to the contrary, it does not frown upon true science, but only upon those atheistic sciences which are too prevalent in modern days, or, more properly, on those who have used 'science falsely so called,' to confirm their own unbelief and denial of divine things. That Catholicism rightly appreciates this danger, let the fearful scepticism among scientific men in Protestant countries bear witness." How plain is it that two equally honest men are here kept apart by their different valuation of the fruits of true religion! Whether there be some "word of reconciliation," some higher synthesis, that shall justify them both, we do not undertake to

say. But, at any rate, such a difference strikingly shows how carefully one must proceed in deciding upon the merits of a religious system from its alleged fruits. Another illustration, not less conducing to charitable judgment, might be drawn from the "Orthodox" estimates and criterions of Christian faith, as compared with the "Liberal." It is not proposed, however, in these limits, to discuss this at length. But let the reader only recall the mutual criminations and recriminations between the contending sects: "You despise good works." "You think a man by his good works may merit heaven." "You, like the old hypocrites, 'for a pretence make long prayers.'" "You think prayer is of little consequence, provided a man lives a moral life." "You lay great stress on religious forms and manners and phraseology, as evidences of Christian character." "You are willing to break down *all* distinctions between Christian and Theist, and practically confess that, to you, the gospel is not God's great method of salvation." Here, also, to harmonize these conflicting views, one must be able to see the limitations of each, and to accept what is true in both. A time may come when some such reconciler shall appear. Meanwhile, the Christian should be more than ever careful, in the application of his Master's rule, not to violate that charity which allows for great "diversities of gifts," and for various expressions of the one informing spirit.

2. But it is still more of a practical difficulty to ascertain *where the fruits came from*. Certainly, we must say, in general, that there are few problems offered to human ingenuity which require so much skill to solve as the precise effect of belief upon life. Given, a man whom we suppose ourselves to know thoroughly,—what he is in his secret thoughts, desires, and purposes, as well as in his professions and manners and whole external life,—how to determine *what made* him to be as he is? Who shall venture to recount all the hidden or open influences that have combined to the production of this result? How much was this man indebted to temperament, how much to early impressions, how much to his companions, how much to the circumstances in which he was

brought up, how much to sickness or health, how much to instruction, how much to his faith in God, how much to the unseen ministries by which God may keep his children's feet from falling and their souls from death? Are there not mysteries enough here suggested to shut the mouth of dogmatism and hasty judgment? We may say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am," but we must be slow to say of ourselves or of others, that we are what we are solely by the influence of our own form of Christian faith, however that may have entered as an essential part into the informing causes of our present character. But while protesting against dogmatism and illiberal judgment, it is no less important to protest against the conclusion of indifference. It *does* "matter what a man believes." Though we cannot know how much or how little opinions have to do with life, we can often discern in ourselves the distinct influence of a real, living faith upon our character, and even upon our conduct. We sometimes hear it openly confessed, "I am a different man since I embraced these views of religion; all things are changed in my conceptions of life and duty. I can work to greater advantage now. What was dark before, is now bright. What used to be a trial and a cross, is now a glorious privilege." To deny the real power of truth over life, would be to deny the reality of conversion, would be to contradict the story of missions in all ages, would be a direct disparagement of the gospel, as the message of grace and truth. He who said, "I am the Truth," said also, "And the life;" and all who accept his authority must see in this language a significant intimation, that *by means of* the truth we receive from him we are to rise into that higher life which he imparts.

"LET him who has the choicest goods of life
Not yearn to add to them the lesser onss!
In large and in the whole God blesses him;
And if the sun makes light for him the day,
Why crave the light of every little torch?"

THE TRUE GOOD OF THE CHILD.

BY REV. A. B. MUZZEY.

THE Chief of Police in Boston, previously to the late Fourth of July, issued a notice to the effect that all children who had lost their way or strayed from their parents or guardians, on that day, would be cared for and returned to their homes, if taken to certain places named in the notice. A striking illustration, I thought, of the protective and parental spirit of our age, and of that beneficent religion which pervades our municipal institutions. All children are taken under its sheltering wing. This great principle seemed to me in harmony with an incident in my own experience.

Walking one day with a friend, we met a little child who had lost his way and was in trouble and tears, and he stirred our hearts at once to pity and help him. "Whose can this child be?" I asked. "I do not know," was the answer; "it is somebody's child," he added, quoting the language of another. That thought should be enough to arouse an interest in every one of these precious beings. Our children—are they truly safe? Are they in that condition for which their Creator intended them? Can we contemplate them with joy, grateful for the past, and hopeful for the future? Is it well with them? What momentous interests are involved in these few words. Not only is religion concerned in the welfare of the young, not only are the institutions of Christianity, public worship, the honor of the Sabbath and the visible Church implicated in their well-being, but from a thousand messengers we are daily receiving the anxious interrogatory, "Is it well with the child?"

Patriotism, alive to the undisclosed destinies of our country, sends to us for tidings of the good or the evil in the germs of her coming rulers, and in the advancing generations of the people. Civil liberty, man's social progress, the great cause of human improvement, the perfection of our race, all these, as if gifted with forms and tongues and with the earnestness of personal solicitude, inquire, Is it well with the child?

And, now, why are these mingled voices? Do they blend as they reach us? Is it the same object which kindles the various beings imagined to address us? I fear it is not. We have much cause to apprehend that some among them mistake what is indeed evil for our children, for good, for a real, substantial, and abiding good to them, and to all who are most deeply affected by their character and fortune.

This leads to the great question, what *is* the true good of a human being?

I ask the parent. How many such reply that it consists in buying and selling and getting gain. One tells us his son is "doing well." And what does he mean by this language? That he is fulfilling the high purpose of his existence? Doing well as a moral, spiritual, and immortal being? Oh, no; but solely that he is accumulating property rapidly; that he is adding to his stocks and bonds, or drawing houses and lands within a prescribed circle, where he can say of them, "This and that are mine." He is choosing his whole heritage among things that perish in the using; for, let him cling to, and increase them as he can, he must sometime die and quit them totally and forever, and this is called "doing well." Another tells us his neighbor is "good;" and what does he mean by that? That he has cultivated and unfolded his noblest powers, and is becoming a thorough and a complete man? No but simply that he can meet his pecuniary engagements. This it is which makes him "good." His commercial character is correct, and his business is a safe one, and why need we require anything more of him?

I ask the man whose highest aspirations are for distinction and power, Is it well with your child? Yes, he replies; the youth has the spirit of ambition. He will strive and struggle, and compete with his rivals, and rise high in office. His name will shine and his honors abound. And that is all that man can desire. As if human applause could satisfy the soul; or as though power over others was the supreme good to man; or as if he who is worshipped by his fellows accomplished, through receiving that incense, the divine purpose for which God endowed him with these noble powers and faculties.

"Is it well with the child?" Indeed, it is so, replies the man of this world. He has all the comforts and luxuries that heart could wish, not a want that is not gratified; he has every means of enjoyment at his command. Who can question that such a life is "well"? None, if it be true that the body was given us to enslave the soul, and if the outward was to master the inward. None will dispute it who believe that man is all matter, that death is the termination of his being, and that God is a creature of the imagination. But if we believe ourselves born to a nobler inheritance, if we listen to the whisper of nature and to the clear voice of revelation, then we shall say, that a youth dedicated to pleasure and indulgence is not well, but ill, present degradation and future woe.

The question is again repeated, and the answer is as before: "What can be better for the child? He is living; he is in health; and his prospect is fair for length of years. What can he possess so valuable as life? Had he departed from this world, we should deem it an irreparable calamity." Yet, precious as life may be, when rightly employed, it is not everything to us; and valuable as health is, being the condition of the highest enjoyment and the largest usefulness, there is something still better; and that is, to use our good health right in doing the work God gave us to do.

I wish now to say that it rests largely with their elders to determine whether it shall be well or ill with our children and youth. The influence of the present generation must do very much to decide the character and the destiny of that which is immediately to succeed it. We hold in our hands the mould in which their mind will be fashioned and their heart receive its impress, and out of which consequently will be the issues of their life. According to the views we cherish, the plans we form, and the rules we lay down and execute in regard to their culture, they will be either intelligent, pure, and self-sacrificing, a blessing to their home, friends and helpers of their country, and an honor to their race, or ignorant, impure, disloyal, selfish, and degraded.

All admit the importance of education in general, and on

this topic we are in little danger of exaggeration. We may overestimate some of its means and instrumentalities, but we can never think more highly than we ought of the culture of the young ; we can never do too much, if it is done in the right way, for their intellectual elevation, their spiritual development, and their moral training.

The formation of the character of the young is the subject which, of all that can be presented to us as Christians, as patriots, or as philanthropists, should most interest our hearts and occupy our hands. I say the formation of character. We live in an age of reform ; and it is a privilege to live in such an age. These are glorious works, and I honor all those who toil wisely for their advancement. God prosper all judicious efforts to restore the erring, reclaim the fallen, and rectify the abuses of the past. But, while we use the pruning-knife on the branches of the tree, let us not forget the trunk. Let us go down to the root ; and the root of these and how many other evils to be reformed lies in our mis-education of the young.

Much, therefore, as I regard the work of the reformer, there is one thing I prize still more ; I had rather help *form* than undertake to *reform*. I am interested in every plan and every effort that promises to restore those who have wandered from the way of God and duty ; but it is better still to keep those who are yet unpolluted in their heavenward course. Preventives are of more value than remedies. Look on the incorrupt child ; his mind is yet unprejudiced ; now is the time to present to it the clear truth. His heart is not palsied ; its moral pulsations are strong ; he loves the things which are true and pure ; you cannot cheat him with "the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule." Who does not long to do something which shall preserve him incorrupt ? What folly to wait until he needs to be *reformed*. What guilt to abandon these children, with their simple tastes, to the

" Social wants that sin against the strength of youth
The social guile that warps us from the living truth."

Instead of putting our little dams across the mighty river, and thinking thus to drive back the waters of iniquity, let us

seal up the fountain of it all. Our voice should be to the young, as they look toward the path of temptation, "Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away."

There are considerations which render the moral and religious education of the youth in this age of pre-eminent importance. Our mental culture is rapidly increasing. Not only in the college and the private and the professional seminary, but in our common schools, the standard of instruction is constantly rising. A new power is thus awakened in our children; they are made capable of doing far more than their parents have done. And now *what* will they do? Shall it be good, or shall it be evil? If the intellect alone be cultivated, it may prove an engine of destruction. If the moral and spiritual nature of these children does not receive a proportionate culture, then will our schools prove anything but a blessing. Instead of a race of benefactors to humanity, we shall raise up only intellectual prodigies, the bane of their age, because never baptized into Christ and Christian principles.

In this country the young finish their education and come forward early; they leave our day schools sooner than formerly. Hence special care is needed to give them early a full, moral, and religious education. We are as yet egregiously deficient in this respect.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and we linger on the shore,
Till the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

Then, too, the young are with us thrown prematurely into the cares and responsibilities of life. The young woman, tender and inexperienced, is immersed early in new relations and burdened with untried duties. Her literary advantages may have been such as to prepare her, so far forth, for these duties. The moral nature not seldom has received no corresponding culture.

And, for our young men, the age demands a much higher moral training to qualify them for their present advanced position and prospects. Our secular life is earnest; and we need an earnest and firm religious faith to counterpoise its influence on the mind and heart. The boy should be imbued with

such principles and established in such habits, and warmed with such affections as will prove a breakwater against the incoming tide of worldliness and sin.

What is to be done to secure this vital object? First of all things, I would say, do not trust to school education alone. Over every institution for the training of his children God appoints the parent as principal. The influence of father and mother reaches into the life-centre of the child; and it goes on in his presence and out of his presence, like the still and solemn march of the years.

It would almost seem as though Providence intended that parents should conduct the whole education of their children in person. But this they cannot do; time is often wanting; and sometimes experience, culture, and other qualifications are lacking.

Besides, the influences of the school-room, its friendships and sympathies are by no means unimportant. An exclusively domestic education is always attended with some evils. Through it a child may become timid, effeminate, and selfish, if not misanthropic. The combination of foreign and fireside culture seems ordained by nature for the child. And to that alliance we should, in the present constitution of society, give in our cheerful adhesion.

To perform his associated work aright, the parent, like the teacher, must have high aims and broad purposes. If they differ here, the child's character may prove but a discordant instrument, yielding all manner of sounds at the will of the performer, and failing utterly of that spirit-harmony for which it was formed.

Ask yourself, then, father and mother, over and over, Is it well with my children? You feel bound to provide for their outward and bodily wants. The thought of neglecting these you would deem unnatural and inhuman. Take the same view of their inward and spiritual wants. Contemplate them as immortal beings; and give not sleep to your eyes until you have devised and commenced the execution of a plan for their everlasting culture and growth. You are a father, and would prepare this son to obtain a livelihood in this present

world. This duty you never for a moment even desire to escape. Regard their eternal life in this same light, and aid them to establish sound principles and Christian purposes.

Do not rest in the mere correction of their faults. Seek to build up in them a positive character; and so lead them to lay up a permanent treasure in heaven. Regard every school as constituted for the furtherance of this divine plan. Let the mother prepare her child for all schools it may enter in this spirit. Much must be done at home previous to the first lesson there, or it will be seed sown on a rock. Accustom your daughter to gaze early and daily in the face of her Father in heaven; and then his name will always and everywhere sound sweetly in her ear. Imbue this boy with all manly and generous and Christian dispositions, so will every other teacher need only to water what you had already planted.

Throughout the period of their attendance at school, seek a complete and cordial co-operation with their teachers. Let not the child's character bear traces of conflicting influences, but show that all tend to one and the same great point. The pavement may, and indeed must be, of divers colors; yet it should constitute but a single mosaic. The means of effecting this union the wise can choose, but resolve that a union shall exist. Do not consent for a single season that your child learn elsewhere what you do not, what you cannot sanction at home. Never relinquish the parental prerogative, but affix the sign manual to whatever of God and truth he anywhere learns.

And when your children are out of the school, continue your instructions. Why do so many of our pupils fail to carry into life the counsels of the school-room? Much of this sad defect is to be ascribed to the want of continuous and confidential intercourse between parent and child on the great themes of religion. Not a few, as they grow in stature, hear no elevating fireside conversation, receive no divine light, and no fresh impulse toward Heaven at home, but witness only a profound silence and apparent disregard of those topics which were so freely and so affectionately talked about in their earliest years. You still love your child? Do not blush.

to manifest your love by holding sweet converse with him on your joint hopes and prospects as fellow-workers in duty and fellow-heirs of glory.

Let these few points be heeded by the parent, and through him a divine knowledge will descend on his children, as the showers of midsummer on the tender grass. Their minds will be active, self-poised, seekers unto death; their conscience will be clear and coercive in its mandates; God will be honored and obeyed; and their sweet affections will open and expand generously toward the great brotherhood of earth.

“HOPE IN GOD.”

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF S. A. MAHLMAN.

HOPE, my heart, in patience hope,
 Thou at last thy flowers shalt gather;
 God is full of tender love,
 Childlike speak thou to thy Father.
 From believing, trusting hearts,
 The God of mercy ne'er departs.

Clouds may come, and clouds may go,
 Rest upon his goodness always;
 To these joyful sunny heights
 Lead these rough and gloomy pathways:
 Wakes for aye his Eye of Light,
 Tremble not in storm and night.

Anchored on the Eternal Rock,
 To the heart of God fast clinging,
 Tell him all thy deepest woes,
 Before him all thy sorrows bringing;
 He is kind, and comfort gives
 To every sorrowing heart that lives.

Let true faith strong courage give;
 Strength the Helper now is sending;
 Soon thou'l understand his ways,
 Soon thou'l find thy sorrows ending.
 God! who life and goodness art!
 In patience hope in him, my heart.

E. L. F.

“THE WORSHIP OF JESUS IN ITS PAST AND PRESENT ASPECTS.”

THIS is the title of a little book by Samuel Johnson, minister of the Free Church at Lynn. It is a plea for Religion against what the author regards as the limitations of Christianity, which he describes as “a special *form* of Religion; a special Church built around the person of Jesus of Nazareth; a corporation organized for his worship,” the term worship being used because the claim is “that the religious sentiment shall revolve about this historical person as its necessary centre, as in some sense the adequate image or representative of God.” In this pamphlet of some ninety small pages the Faith of Christendom in the Christ of God is disposed of in what we are constrained to designate as a very summary manner, considering the importance of the questions moved and handled. We have read the pages with considerable care, and with the utmost respect for the writer’s ability, culture, and purpose, and he has wrought a good work upon us, if it be a good work to have deepened and quickened our faith in the Lord, whose service is our perfect freedom and our purest joy. The truth that Mr. Johnson sets forth, and he sets forth a great deal of truth, does not in the least conflict with the persuasion of all Christians that Jesus is the Lord. Let Christianity be judged by “the unfolding religious nature.” It can bear the judgment. Let it be judged by an age that “knows God as the living, instant Spirit in every fresh experience of the meaning and power of principles.” By all means let us have judgment, but do not let us have *prejudgment*. Do not close up open questions on one side more than on the other; especially in this matter do not assume that what is claimed for Christ by John, or, if you will, by some one else, in the fourth Gospel, *cannot* be true, or that in the other three Gospels we have nothing worthy of the name of history, because *some* able scholars contend that we have not. We cannot see that dogmatism is any more to be allowed in the Theist than in the Christian. “Self-defence against au-

thority in excess" does not require us to understate the claims of the authority protested against. Of course, if "the very Spirit of Truth and Love" forbids us to glorify Christ, we must cease to glorify him; but what if that Spirit does nothing of the kind, but shows him to us as our Master? Mr. Johnson will pardon us if we say that he seems to us to have unconsciously prejudged the whole matter which he supposes himself to be impartially investigating, and that if an advocate of the Truth as it is in Jesus were to bring forward the guesses and shadows in behalf of the Gospel which he brings forward against its claims, he would recognize upon the instant the meagre and unsubstantial character of the apology. And, unwilling as we are to disturb any foundations which Mr. Johnson *does* rest upon, we must for the Truth's sake ask him if the persuasion of the immanence of the Perfect God in our world is not open to difficulties the same in kind with those that must be met by one who believes that God was in Christ after the manner commonly held by Christians. Mr. Johnson has not written the first word which even tends to discredit the conviction that the Infinite Love embodied itself in Jesus of Nazareth, and through him inaugurated an era of Divine Life in humanity. He *has* shown how all that went before and went along with this movement from above, prepared for and aided it. He has not shown that the Word was not made flesh; but he *has* shown that He was the true Light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

We are ready to think that upon a reconsideration of a question so great as the claim of Christianity to be not a form of Religion, but Religion itself, a reconsideration which Mr. Johnson can hardly fail to make, he will see that in his estimate of the moral quality of Jesus, even upon the supposition that he is rightly reported in the New Testament, he has fallen short of the charity, not to say the discernment, which are required of the judge. Why ask again, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" If Christ was what the Church believe him to have been, what he is represented to have been in other parts of the Gospels, why should he not forgive sins? Why, when it is an "open question" whether many of his

statements concerning a Judgment Day and the destruction of the world are to be taken literally or not, virtually assume that they are to be taken literally ? Or, again, who that has ever looked into his heart and examined his life with searching scrutiny, has not found a meaning for what the Lord says about everlasting life and death ? That Christ was truly a man, with all the limitations of humanity except that of sin, Christians have always believed, or ought to have believed ; and when limitations of one sort and another are hinted at, when the authority of the evangelists, — good for nothing else, — is appealed to for these, we only ask, in the words of Christ, and in his behalf, Which of you convinceth me of sin ?

We ask all readers of Mr. Johnson's little book to read over the four Gospels again when they have done with him, and see if Jesus will vanish at his word from history ; if we have not stamped upon those pages of evangelists and apostles the image of a living man who gathered the world about him because he was the Son of God with power in the Spirit of Truth and Holiness ; if we have not more than a dissolving view of one who was raised to the throne of the worshipping world because the age in which he lived was searching for a divine centre, and found in him a man whose obscurity "secured him from that public criticism which would make his imperfections known," giving him in this the advantage over Apollonius of Tyana, and favoring the operation of "the Law of Religious Idealization," to which the world is indebted for its Religions, — the world, we say, because, as Mr. Johnson does not hesitate to declare, the philosophers in the time of Christ "were *too enlightened* to stop short in the worship of a man," a new version of St. Paul's "whom none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Papias, Justin, Ireneus, may or may not have been utterly without historic sense, but we think that this does not affect their testimony as to the estimation in which the Gospels were held by Christians of that day. M. Nicolas may have "shown that there is no proof either that our present Gospels are quoted, or that they were

ever read in the churches, till the close of the second century," or he may only have made a bold statement of his opinion to that effect; nevertheless, there are the stories, there is the life, and when the world believed in Jesus, it was more than a providential illusion, which, having lasted its time, is beginning to vanish. The Age of the Gospel is indeed an Age of the Spirit. When God sent his Son into the world, he made small provision for the letter. The Gospel is not really written until it comes out in living characters. The Spirit of Jesus, moreover, is a Spirit of prophecy, and yet from those divine lips there fell divine words which will never be surpassed, which were providentially recorded, which unfold continually in new meanings and applications from age to age, and amply justify the claims which Jesus is represented to have made for himself as the express image of the Invisible God. We cannot avoid saying that Mr. Johnson does no justice either to the origin or to the contents of our four Gospels. Spite of what he alleges, the Root does bear us, not we the Root. We did not create Christ. He created us. Mr. Johnson says that "neither the character of the records nor the manner of their origination authorize that postulate of perfection through which alone that claim (of worship) could vest in any being;" but, on the other hand, they who were with Christ and received his Spirit were altogether satisfied, and so have been all from that day to this who have entered into their life. Can we say anything more of our Faith in *God*? Is it anything but a Faith? Where are the records that prove him the Perfect One as he is revealed in our hearts? Or what can we satisfactorily say about "the manner of the origination of those records," so obscure, so contradictory, so perplexing? If *persons* are to yield to *principles*, what is to become of the person of the Father? Is *he* revealed save in the Son, in the Son who so clearly, consciously, and authoritatively said Father, Providence, Immortality; said it once in Judea, says it now in the hearts of all who are born again?

If Mr. Johnson is right, Christianity is a superstition,—a very noble one, but a superstition nevertheless,—and indeed every form of religion must be a superstition. God *cannot* so

possess our humanity as to set forth one altogether Divine Man. He *can* withhold his fulness so utterly as to afflict us with the presence in his world of the cannibal or the heartless libertine, but the God in man we cannot have. The next idealization, if we were to have any, would be an advance upon the last, yet likewise destined to be discredited and shown to be only an idealization. But it is the Age of Principles, and Persons shall have power no longer. What if that age began in Christ? What if the Lord was that Spirit? What if the Life out of which Mr. Johnson ventures to criticise him was from him, and will yet approve every deed and word which can be shown to have been his,—even those strong warnings from which Mr. Johnson's humanity starts back? What if Theism, with its sublime faith in a Perfect God, must defend itself like Christianity against the assertion that its God is the creature and not the Creator of the greater soul,—the soul which, when it dares be true, as the Truth is in the Truth, and not in any imagined Divinity, finds much in the works and ways of nature below its noble ideals and grand, everlasting principles, and is compelled to pronounce itself better than the Being who made all things,—some things past our finding out?

In a word, Mr. Johnson's book seems to us a most conclusive argument for the Faith against which he so earnestly protests. Better than he knows does he preach Jesus that he is the Son of God. He will advance the "momentous work of religious emancipation" from the dogmas of an extreme rationalism, and we count his book amongst the evidences of Christianity.

R. E.

Poverty, when frankly acknowledged and nobly supported, instead of casting a shade, throws a brighter lustre on sterling worth; and the proud sheaves of the elder sons of fortune bow down before the humble sheaf of the less favored and more deserving brother.

C. FOLLEN.

THE WEB.

BY S. D. ROBBINS.

THROUGH the sunshine, through the gloom,
Still she standeth at the loom ;
Task appointed never leaveth,
Night and day alike she weaveth.
How the silken web may tend,
How the varied colors blend,
To the Master's will she leaveth, —
Simple, hopeful, only weaveth.
Cheerily the work she plies,
Swift the silver shuttle flies ;
She is patient, God believeth,
Earnest, self-forgetful, weaveth.
Silently the hours are sped,
Love at last unwinds the thread ;
Liberty she glad receiveth,
Warp and woof no longer weaveth.
So, unconscious at life's loom,
Through the sunlight and the gloom,
Robes of heaven the spirit weaveth,
Ere mortality she leaveth.

THE inward holy garrison, that of faith, which holds by the truth, by sacred facts, and not by appearances, must be strengthened and nourished and upheld, and so enabled to resist the onset of the powers without. A friend's remonstrance may appear an unkindness, a friend's jest an unfeelingness, a friend's visit an intrusion, — nay, to come to higher things, during a mere headache it will appear as if there was no truth in the world, no reality but that of pain anywhere, and nothing to be desired but deliverance from it. But all such impressions caused from without — for, remember, the body and its innermost experiences are only *outside of the man* — have to be met by the inner confidence of the spirit, resting in God, and resisting every impulse to act according to that which *appears to it*, instead of that which *it believes*.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

GATHERING IN SUMMER.

BY RUFUS ELLIS.

IT has been said and repeated more than once that there never was a soul converted during the summer months; but I think that the case is not quite so bad as that. God made summer and winter, and through all his creations he seeks for souls. There is a summer increase, and, as the text reminds us, they are wise who gather it. Because a few houses of worship in our cities are closed, a few metropolitan preachers out of town, a few choirs disbanded, or because there comes now and then a day when the muscles of mind and body are alike relaxed, and, for the moment, spite of what the hymn teaches, it is the whole of life to live, we must not conclude that the Church, with all its great interests, is everywhere adjourned until after the dog-days, and that there can be no earnest and holy living until the mercury falls again. There is a religion for summer also. We need not go into the autumn impoverished and demoralized. If you will look at the trees, even after this lingering, wintry spring, you will see that the force in them has become new wood already; but we may be very sure that God does not delight in the plants as he delights in the souls of his children. A spirit still prepared will gather day by day rich summer fruits, receiving and giving a light fairer than the light of the sun, and a fragrance sweeter than that which enriches the common air. If the passing season seem to any without opportunities, or, it may be, worse than useless so far as the highest knowledge and the purest love are concerned, the poverty and the hindrances are all within.

"He that gathereth in summer is a wise son,"—wise enough to be a-gathering still even in days of comparative quietness. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept,"—the wise as well as the foolish; but the wise alone slumbered to any purpose. There are passive conditions of growth. If thou knewst the gift of God! and how he has made everything beautiful in the summer time, that almost

whilst we dream away the weariness of many hard months we may be led through beauty into truth, and, "deeply drinking in the soul of things, we may be wise perforce." The most earnest and most Christian spirit may well take time to gaze upon the raiment passing the glory of Solomon which the Divine Workmaster fashions for the humblest flowers of the field. As God searches us with his awful Truth, until sometimes, in the terrible brightness, our eyes are well-nigh blinded, so he kindles about us this sweet fulgence, and seems to say to us in our eagerness and our hastes that there is a time for all things, even in this most tragic world; that there is a hunger for beauty as well as a hunger for bread to be satisfied. And as the blessed Providence has ever sowed even the dusty wayside and the hardest plains with the seeds of fair and flowering plants, so man begins at length to see that he can give no better gift out of his abundance to the multitude in our cities than our gardens and parks, with their sweet blossoms, their healing green, their delicious fountains. How the good old word "*Common*" keeps its place amongst the refinements of our modern speech, and summons from the dark and noisome streets its glad household groups! The humblest may gather with the wisest that increase of beauty. There are questions which Nature does not answer; there are sorrows that Nature does not soothe; and yet it is a benediction that calm face, and those outward glories are symbols of realities fairer and more divine than they. If thou knewst the gift of God! that he can give thee in a single summer day, on the humblest spot of earth, a beauty which shall beggar thine utmost bravery, the achievement of a long life of unwearyed toil! Be wise to gather in summer this increase of natural beauty, and then it will not be needful to toil so hard for so much that only counterfeits that divine treasure. As God giveth unto his beloved sleep, so he gives to our fevered and overwrought world the quietness of these summer days.

2. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son;" wise again because he knows how to use the freedoms of the season as not abusing them, and still increaseth himself and others with the increase of God. The city churches are closed,

some of them, but the country churches are open, and the wise son is found in one of them on the Lord's Day, being well aware that it is the same gospel which is preached in the village and in the town, and that the Christianity of a discourse is often in inverse proportion to the splendor of its rhetoric. Sons that are not wise, and whose chief occupation in summer is to scatter and not gather, have, I am sorry to say it, found their way into many of our New England villages, — not any too Christian before, spite of our perpetual boast of New England civilization, — and the result is a greatly demoralized neighborhood. If a house of worship is not at hand, the wise son provides some simple service of prayer and praise, and sets forth some simple gospel word in parlor or school-house, or, as our old congregations worshipped at the first, under some spreading tree, thus striving to make the neighborhood more, not less, Christian. The wise son will resist the temptation to lapse into easy, self-indulgent summer ways, knowing that even in summer, whilst men sleep, an enemy comes and sows tares amongst the wheat, winter wheat to spring from the summer sowing. And there is a positive summer increase to be gathered by parents who scarcely have time during the winter to instruct their children, but must leave all that to the Sunday-school teacher. What fair opportunities are afforded during these blessed afternoons of the summer Sunday, — the church on the hill-side too far to be visited again; the church in the home ever ready for the little group of worshippers gathered to keep alive those dear old sanctities without which our gold becomes dim, and our fine gold dross, and life in the most favored circumstances is wearisome and contemptible. Not jaded, but inspirited, refreshed, edified, the tide of a better life pouring through body and soul alike, should the household return to the city from the summer vacation! Alas for poor mortal flesh and blood, if it must be the winter over again, with no more opportunity to go beneath the surface to the great undercurrents and the rock foundations of our life! God is nearer to us in man than in nature, — nearest in that divine society, the true Church of Christ, — and yet we find him best in man and in

the Church when, like the Divine Man, we go aside into the mountain to pray alone, and are not content until, after the tempest and the earthquake and the fire, there comes the still small voice which sounds not only for prophet or apostle, but for every soul that has found grace to listen. What a blessed increase of the summer were that gentle voice!

3. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son." Most of us need some weeks of rest, or, at least, a change in our works and in our places. Undoubtedly the necessity is in many cases exaggerated. There is a restlessness which would be best cured by good, hard, useful work. Undoubtedly the labor of the year might be more profitably spread over more days in the year, so that there would be less fatigue to be relieved by long repose. Undoubtedly there are those whose vacations are the hardest and dreariest and least restful portions of the year; but, taking things as we find them, with closed churches, disbanded Sunday-schools, scattered congregations, absentee ministers, Christian earnestness and ingenuity will find an increase to be gathered. The closing and disbanding need not be carried to such great lengths. There are some who are free in summer to do the work which winter engagements hinder their doing. If we have gathered up any Christianity in town with the help of our Suffolk Conferences and Unions for Christian Work and Theatre Preachings and anniversary meetings, there is need enough of it in the country, which is fast becoming the best of missionary ground. The ministers may stop writing sermons, but they ought not to lose any opportunity of preaching what they have already written. Above all, we ought not to forget the multitude of persons to whom the season brings no rest from daily care, no pause from daily toil, no break in the perpetual routine; who look out upon the summer's early dawn as upon the winter's lingering day, from the same attic window or through the same dingy area. They ought not to be out of our minds, even though they may be out of sight. A very little system will put them within reach of friends and counsellors. An occasional visit will be worth more in this season than it can be during that part of the year when the ministers of

Christian charity swarm in our cities, and sometimes almost compete for the opportunity to serve; when philanthropy, in some of its phases, at least, is almost a drug. Surely, we are without excuse if we forget that summer has its wants, its sicknesses, its sorrows, its loneliness, as well as the winter. I have been told that sometimes it is almost impossible to find in the city a clergyman to perform for the dead the last offices of religion, and to administer the consolations of our gospel to those who mourn. Surely, this is as needless as it is wrong, and brings deserved reproach not indeed upon Christianity, but upon those who so little appreciate the privileges of their high calling as the stewards of its manifold mysteries and its sacred trusts. In the hope that there would be an audience, and that worshippers and hearers could be gathered better in a hall than in a church, our famous and historic hall has been opened for Sunday afternoon worship during the summer, and we will trust that, as something has been done within those old walls for the liberty of the citizen of the earthly commonwealth, so of those who shall be gathered to keep holy time, not a few may be set free from the world, the flesh, and the devil to serve Christ, and be fellow-citizens with the saints in the kingdom of truth and goodness. It may take a wise son to gather in summer, amidst its lassitudes and its dispersions and its distractions, but there is a wisdom which is equal even to such harvesting, and the gathering may be as rich and blessed as when believing Ruth gleaned after the reapers.

There is reason to say that the chaff of our summer threshing-floors is over-abundant; swept along by the summer winds, it bears but a sorry testimony to our summer harvest. Some are so lifeless that one might fancy we lived in the torrid zone, and not in temperate New England; and some are so busy in their dissipations that one might fancy our life to be one long holiday, to be passed in driving and in dancing. May God hasten the coming of that day of moral maturity, when to live in pleasure and for pleasure, even during the summer months, shall be simply impossible, as impossible as for the man to return to his nursery and busy himself with the

old playthings. "My Father worketh hitherto," said Jesus, "and I work." There ought to be a grace in us answering to the renewed beauty of the outward world, a spirit glowing as the sun and genial as the soft air. Let us fling open the windows of the soul as we lift the windows of our houses. Let us, as the custom is in warmer climates, come out in the flesh and in the spirit from our dark retreats and the inner chambers of our isolations, and sit upon the door-steps and be friends and brethren unto those who pass by the way. It was when Abraham sat by the door of his tent in the heat of the day that the angels of God met him. The wise son cannot lose three months out of each of his threescore and ten years, because they are the summer months. Life is too short, and the work to be done in it for God is too pressing, that we can be so prodigal of precious time. Rather let us walk in this sweet and pleasant light more truly than ever, children of the light and partakers of the life of God. Then shall be fulfilled in us also the old blessing with which Moses blessed the tribe of Joseph: "For the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that croucheth beneath, and for the precious things brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof, let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph!"

GOD'S REFLECTION IN MAN'S FACE.

"How lovely seems the sun to us, at night,
When his soft light dawns on us from the moon!
'Tis the sun's light and not the moon's, although
She is so near, and he has dropped from sight.
Hast thou done some good deed, and therefore now
A human face smiles on thee through its tears?
Then see there, too, the Godhead's mediate face
Soft-beaming as the *solar-lunar* light!"

SKETCHES OF EGYPTIAN TRAVEL.

BY REV. JAMES D'NORMANDIE.

(Continued.)

WHEN we awoke the first morning in Jerusalem, the sun was shining on the long side of Olivet facing the city, with here and there a circle of shade from a clump of olive trees, or a field of wheat full-headed. The brilliant dome of the mosque of Omar sent its flashes of light all around the city. The platform or terrace by our chamber gave us a view of the general plan of the houses. The lower story, with frequently no other pavement than the baked or hardened earth, was the receptacle of all refuse, a work-shop or a stable. By a stone stairs on the outside, the next floor is reached, and here are the apartments of the house. If there be no other story, the ceiling is formed into a kind of dome, or low, beehive roof, and these rounded, oven-shaped roofs rise in all quarters of the city. If, as it was our good fortune, there is still another flight, the view of the city is greatly improved. The only street which, from its width or length, is worthy a name is the Via Dolorosa, or Mournful Way, with an arch called Ecce Homo, by which the French were building a fine convent. The flags of various nations designated the respective consular offices. Always, from all parts of the city noticeable now, as must have been Solomon's Temple, the great mosque of Omar rises from its marble and grassy platform,— to the Mohammedans the third sacred place in the world, to Jews and Christians the first. Across the deep ravine of the Kedron is Mount Olivet, with its historical associations and peace-giving memories.

Our first desire was to gain some general idea of the city and its surroundings. After providing ourselves with canes made of wood from Jericho, through the inclined, dirty, narrow, dark, and roughly-paved ways, under gloomy and dark bazaars, we came to the citadel and tower of David, and then to the walls of Zion, near by the Jaffa gate. Because we

refused to give up our sun-umbrellas to the guard, who seemed to think them some new kind of American fire-arms, he put on his sabre and followed us, closely watching every motion. In some places the walls of Jerusalem rise to a great height where the earth has been washed into the valleys, or the need of defence was greater; in other the earth comes within a few yards of the battlements. In some places the walls were wide and easy to walk upon, in other quite narrow, and with difficulty one would cling to the parapets, while a few steps led to a wider wall. As a protection against any foreign enemy, the fortifications are of no value; against native disturbances, they might avail much. The natural trenches of its valleys are a far greater strength. So we walked about Zion and went round about her; we told the towers thereof; we marked well her bulwarks; we considered her palaces, that we might tell it to the generations following.

Jerusalem, the habitation of peace, but unequalled in its records of war, the sacred city of Hebrews, Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, is compactly built within its walls, and nature has almost settled what its general boundaries must always have been. Its population now is variously estimated from thirteen to thirty thousand souls, but it covers a very small area. Unlike many cities of Europe, where gradually the assurances of civilization have led the inhabitants to creep beyond the city walls, Jerusalem remains with all still enclosed. Palestine is a mass of mountains, and Jerusalem is nearly of the same elevation as the highest land in England, being twenty-two hundred feet above the sea level. The soil beneath the present surface is composed of ruins of houses and aqueducts, thirty or forty feet below the foundations of the houses. As in the country or in passing over the hills one finds everywhere traces of volcanic agency, and the earth has a hollow tread, so everywhere in Jerusalem far down reach the traces of innumerable sieges, the volcanic eruptions of human passions, and as one treads over the ruins they have left, the hollow reverberations sound the lamentations of the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities;" and still, as ever, when one thinks of the divine voice which might have hushed the bit-

terness of strife into harmony, we hear that voice, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killst the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Beyond the walls of the city, the land seems rather desolate ; rocks everywhere come out above the surface, and over it large stones are thickly strewed. On one side is the deep valley or ravine of Kedron, on the other the valley of Hinnom, which in later times came to be the representation of the world of future punishment. The valley of Kedron is the deeper and darker, and was known as the black valley ; the valley of Hinnom was wider and greener, and Milton speaks of the pleasant valley of Hinnom.

Early in the pilgrimage of Palestine we were reminded by its general surface-features of some parts of our New England, and early came the thought to return and be cherished again and again. Why, if Providence gave to the former land so high and pure a religion, might it not be the design of Providence to give to another land of like outline the highest appreciation, development, and living of that religion ? There was nothing besides the points already mentioned to attract the eye in the city whose magnificence was at one time the rival, perhaps, of Antioch or Rome ; and, as a wise modern traveller observes, Jerusalem seems to have become the capital of a nation for the very contrary reasons which have given eminence to other capitals. Other cities have asked, not for beauty, but for advantageousness of situation, for readiness of approach, or easy communication with other lands, for the benefit of rivers, or lakes, or an ocean harbor. Jerusalem is in the centre of a country most difficult of approach, beautiful for situation, but for that alone. As no city on earth has, since the Christian era, so drawn towards it the gaze of all Christendom, so no city on earth has seen such vicissitudes of government and anarchy, prosperity and decay. In early Scriptures we find it mentioned among the cities of Benjamin, then David comes to make it the capital of his kingdom, then Solomon builds the temple on Mount Moriah, and Jerusalem

becomes the seat and centre of all civil and religious affairs, and Zion, properly only the southernmost part, became in poetry the name of the whole city. Then came the ruin of the city after Solomon, and its restoration under Cyrus. Then all Palestine came under the sway of Egypt in the reign of Ptolemy. Another Egyptian ruler razed the walls of Jerusalem, then Herod rebuilt and adorned it, then the Romans brought all its glory again to the ground, and in its desolation it seemed almost forgotten. Through all these changes the Jews, with their persistent and religious stubbornness, clung to it, if only they might find a foothold or resting-place among its ruins. When Christianity became popular and powerful, the religion of emperors and states, when prophecies and traditions became literally interpreted, and when it was thought the glory of God could best be promoted by dwarfing instead of developing the life of the soul, pilgrimages to Jerusalem began. Among the most famous of these companies, we find Helena, the mother of Constantine, making the journey at the age of eighty years, and building a cathedral at Bethlehem and on Mount Olivet. Then Constantine follows and removes the heathen temple to Venus, and, supposing he had discovered the site of the Holy Sepulchre, built over the purified spot a magnificent church. The Jews he permitted to return and wail by the stones of their once holy and beautiful temple, and the roads to Zion were all the time thronged by pious and profane pilgrims, with the desire of renewing or commencing their religious life in the presence of the very scenes sanctified by the steps of the Master. Then came the Persians, who stormed the city, murdered the inhabitants, razed the churches, and carried away the *veritable cross of Jesus*. Again the Romans triumphed, and again yielded to the Arabians, when, twelve hundred years ago, the Kaliph Omar built on the site of Solomon's temple the mosque which now bears his name. The Mohammedans demanded such exorbitant tribute from the crowds of pilgrims, and treated them so harshly withal, that Europe was stirred into the most unanimous fury of religious zeal and fanatical, ignorant superstition the world has ever

seen, and the Crusades, a less excusable blot upon the history-page of religion than even the persecutions by Pagans or Romanists, began.

Their strange infatuations, their prodigies of sufferings, their unhallowed, unenlightened zeal were untold, until Godfrey of Bouillon became King of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt, and the mosque became a Christian cathedral. Then came the wild and equally zealous hosts of Mussulmen, headed by Saladin, and captured the city from, to them, the infidel hands, took down the cross, set up the crescent, purified the desecrated places by rose-water from Damascus, turned all the churches and cathedrals into mosques, since when the cry of the muezzin has never ceased from the minarets.

What a world-history of combat and struggle, of victory and peace, of curses and prayers, of charities and robberies, of destruction and of life, of overthrows and renewings, of questionable zeal, of unquestionable and unholy passions, has been written by the strife of Jew, Christian, and Arab, from the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple to the tears of Jesus over the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Never has a city been so besieged and ruined and razed and rebuilt; never has a city been held so sacred by conflicting faiths so ardently held, so bitterly defended; never has a city been so prayed for and prayed against; never has the very name of a city meant so much to childhood or to age; never have such multitudes longed to see before death any other city; never has another city been so connected with this life and the next, with prophecy, miracle, and inspiration, with the holy and unholy, as Jerusalem. Never has any city had its record so widely and piously sung, and if Socrates was fortunate in his biographer, Jerusalem was trebly favored by Prophet, Psalmist, and Saviour.

It has been the great ambition of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land to establish beyond question the very spot on which every event connected with our faith took place. Tradition, imagination, fraud, probability, are all called upon to give sacredness to the localities. But if the localities could

be assured, how sad to see them everywhere covered up with the votive offerings, the gold and silver lamps, the clouds of incense, the sensual priests, the idolatrous worshippers. Again and again the question is asked, Is the Holy Land disappointing or satisfying ? The reply is, that if one have unreasonable or superstitious expectations ; if he expects to find the Jerusalem of Solomon, or the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, in the dirty town which to-day covers the glorious situation of Zion, he will be disappointed. If he expects to find Palestine what it was in the time of Herod, with gorgeous cities, rich valleys, and terraced hills, vine-clad and olive-crowned, he will be disappointed. If he expects to find the religion of the Saviour in the home of the Saviour, he will be disappointed, — constantly, grievously disappointed. But if, on the other hand, he cares little about this or that particular spot ; if he cares not whether the points shown are the veritable ones ; if he would prefer Jacob's well-side at Samaria to some gilded chapel and some graven image ; if he would prefer the Mount of Olives to some golden altar ; the Sea of Galilee to some basin of holy water ; the hillsides by Nazareth, with their peaceful memories, to some mumbled liturgy ; if he would prefer the clear, soft sky, which arches to-day as graciously as over Jesus, to some cathedral dome ; if he would see the flowers and the reeds, the trees and the fields, the sparrows and the flocks, the shepherds and the vineyards, as when they suggested the parables to Jesus ; if he would see the long, dark range of the Moab hills round about Jerusalem, as the encircling God is round about his people, — instead of disappointment, there come ever new surprises, ever peaceful memories.

Here are two facts to be borne in mind, as we now visit the so-called sacred places of Jerusalem. 1. There is no incident related in the Scriptures, as occurring in or near Jerusalem, which is not connected with some spot in the city or neighborhood. 2. There is not one of these places which is indisputably certain. But they have been shown with a feeling of satisfaction for many generations, and one, at least, the temple-site, by consenting traditions must be, in general outline,

preserved. In the Via Dolorosa several places are pointed out to the pilgrim. The arch of Ecce Homo, spanning the Mournful Way, is supposed to mark the place where Jesus stood with the thorn-crown and purple robe, when Pilate said, "Behold the man." Near by the arch, which is merely a stone bridge thrown across the narrow street, we are shown the Judgment Hall of Pilate and the scene of the flagellation. Dingy, gloomy, low rooms are covered with the merest daubs of most horrid designs, representing, or rather imagining what occurred at those times; whose solemn recital in the unadorned records touches the heart, — but as seen at Jerusalem to-day, fills with disgust. Before each altar will be a few feeble, flickering tapers, or a few more feeble, flickering priests. There is but one term I can think of which at all expresses the condition of worship at Jerusalem. It impresses you everywhere as barren, given over to rites and formulas, — barren of spirit and of life. At St. John Lateran, the Basilica in Rome, which in sacredness ranks even above St. Peter's, bearing over its door the inscription, "*Omnium urbis et orbis ecclesiastiarum mater et caput,*" we had seen the Scala Santa, or Holy Staircase, up which the penitents were slowly and prayerfully toiling, and here we were at the threshold where it is believed to have stood. Of the places more evidently superstitiously reverenced, as the colonnade to which the decree of Pilate was affixed, or on which the cock crew, or the line on the rocky surface where the girdle of the Virgin dropped to convince the doubting Thomas, it is not worthy to speak. Far more interesting than the past traditions was the present worship, — for, as evening drew on, and we passed the French convent of Ecce Homo, we heard the vesper-hymn of the nuns and children. Attracted by its plaintive devotion, we knocked, and were admitted to the little chapel. A few of those sweet voices, tender and subdued, and those calm and peaceful countenances which one meets more frequently among the Sisters of Charity and the Quakers than among all the other sects in Christendom, were leading the devotions of the convent children. Thus it was that from that upper room the first Christian hymn fell upon the ears of some evening wanderer in the once imperial city.

Another day we went to this convent, and, walking among the arches which support its walls, saw the real condition of this city, now built upon the ruins of innumerable sieges and overthrows and destructions. Traces of cisterns and aqueducts, of walls and buildings, the sound of trickling water, were on all sides. The real Judgment Hall, whose site we were shown, was probably twenty or thirty feet below its present location. From the roof of the convent the view of Jerusalem was complete and interesting,—the roofs flat, or with their oven-shaped domes; the large and stately convents of the different sects; the English chapel; the Holy Sepulchre, with its dark walls; the great, open, green Temple-area with its olive and cypress trees; the magnificent mosques rising from Mount Moriah, its highest ground; the walls giving so secluded and ancient an appearance to the whole city; the dry channel of Kedron; the slope of Mount Olivet, and afar the long range of the Moab hills, beyond the mysterious gulf of the Dead Sea and the rapid flow of the Jordan.

Some of the most interesting memories of Jerusalem cluster around the brow of Mount Zion. A slender, graceful minaret rises above a mosque-dome which is supposed to mark the tomb of David. Within that mosque, and reached by a long flight of stone steps from the outside, is a large, upper, vaulted, gothic chamber, dim, barren, and cheerless, but which is held sacred as being the scene of several scriptural events. It is called the Cœnaculum, as being the room in which the last supper was held; but here also, it is said, was the meeting after the Resurrection, here occurred the miracle of Pentecost; here was the home and death of the Virgin, and here the burial of Stephen. All the Bible incidents which could be attached to no other locality have been gathered into this room of a building which is claimed to be the only one escaping the overthrow and ruin of the city by Titus. More reverenced than for these, it is also worshipped by Jew, Mussulman, and even Christian, as holding beneath it the ashes of David and Solomon, but guarded so strictly by the Arabs that no investigations can be made. Near by the Cœnaculum is the house of Caiaphas, a large, substantial, stone building; and

not far off is an Armenian convent, with a chapel glittering with gold and silver offerings and ornaments, and guarding their part also of the sacred relics,— the stone that closed the Holy Sepulchre, the prison of Christ, the spot where Peter denied his Lord, and the court where the cock crew.

As we passed on to our hotel, after seeing these places, more saddened than uplifted, we came to the quarters of the Lepers. Here, in the world, yet cut off from the world, a society of themselves, lepers for parents, leper friends, leper children born into a doomed life, to give hope for a little while and then fear, and then certain death, was the most heart-rending beggar community we ever saw. With the disease in every stage, they follow, or, where they cannot follow, sit by the wayside, with piercing cries for an alms. No sight in all the Holy Land brings to you so touchingly the Saviour's works of healing and mercy.

Not far distant from the Lepers' quarters we visited a Jewish synagogue. Here were the seats and desks on the floor for the male members, and the galleries for the females. By the east wall, to which all must turn as the prayers are recited, is the Holy Ark, with the enclosed Pentateuch, and opposite it, near the centre, is the platform from which the Pentateuch is read, while the preacher delivers his sermons from another platform close by the "Ark." The Jews in Jerusalem must strike every one as a dilapidated race, but a synagogue on Mount Zion! how it brings to us the departed glory of a dying race! what memories of Solomon and David, of judge and prophet, of priest and psalmist,— nay, even of Jesus entering one of them, as was his wont on the Sabbath-day!

The Holy Sepulchre is the great object of every pilgrimage, but of all places it is the most unsatisfying and unrewarding. First, it is not only questionable, it is more than probable, it is not the exact place which would be sanctified in the memory. Then it is divided among several sects, each watching eagerly to steal the sacred relics from the rest, each ready to destroy the other. Then guides beset and torment and distract you, and priests and beadle cry aloud for charity; and every year at Holy Week, in Jerusalem, the early home of

Christianity,—nay, just where Jesus taught of love and peace,—the Mohammedan soldiers, in long lines, have to be gathered into the Cathedral to keep those who call themselves Christians from tearing each other to pieces.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a dark mass of buildings, in view from almost every part of the city. After threading the narrow, rough, and difficult streets, one stoops through a low gateway, and is in the open court before the Cathedral. This court-pavement is covered with relics, which are offered to the strangers,—beads and amulets of every kind, from every place sacred to Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. Near by is a mosque, and all around are stairs and steps and ladders and walls, by which the monks climb into the galleries and chambers which are in all parts of the venerable building. After we enter, the strange and varied character of the place is no less marked. The great mass of walls is divided among the Greek, Latin, Coptic, Syrian, and Armenian churches, each with a chapel, or chapels and altars, gorgeous or barren as their wealth and contributions may be great or small. The Greek Church thinks it has Constantine's Basilica; the Latin Church has its altar over the Holy Tomb itself. In the centre, under the Cathedral dome, is the Chapel of the Sepulchre. This small space is itself divided among the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians, and each has covered over its allotted space with gold and silver offerings, with gildings and marble, and hung every part overhead with gold and silver lamps. Around this chapel is the great excitement at Easter time, and we were shown the little aperture through which the concealed priest sends out the fire which is called holy, and which the pilgrims receive as from heaven.

So intense is the feeling among these sects, so unwilling are they to trust one another, that, as the moment draws near when the fire is to appear, the Mohammedan Governor of Jerusalem has to remove the cloth covering the altar, after the religious ceremonies have been performed, and then the holy fire is diffused by torches, for each pilgrim to light his taper. We were not present during this ceremony, but one who has written the best descriptive work on Palestine says that, with

the confusion and darkness, the wrangling and yells, its most appropriate designation would be "a holiday in hell."

Such is Christian worship in Jerusalem to-day, and amidst it all we hear the voice of Jesus whispering, "God is a Spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

(To be continued.)

ALL IS BORN OF THOUGHT.

THOUGHT is the very greatest power of all.
The mind of man bears up the heaviest load,
Enormous, gorgeous structures, — built of clouds ;
Breath is to man all that he feels, endures.
Praise and opinion are the strongest pillars
Of things, of men, and even of gods themselves.
And things, when once built up, are not torn down,
But thought down, laughed down, and so swept away !
What thou no more believest, is no more.
Thought is the very greatest power of all ;
And so not meaningless, but full of sense,
Was the old word : The world is but — a thought.

— THE LAYMAN'S BREVIARY.

BEAUTY IN HOME MATTERS.

ENGRAVINGS shed their spirit over a household. The calm portraits of the great and worthy dead exercise a great influence over me. I could look on those over my own fireplace until they seem neither absent nor departed, but living yet. Every good picture is the best of sermons and lectures. The sense informs the soul. Whatever you have, have beauty. Let beauty be on the paper on your walls. It is as easy to choose a paper suggestive of the lovely in form and color as the uncouth. Why should not every household object be sanctified with this grateful charm ? Each chair, each table, each tea or chamber service, and every object for kitchen or parlor, for the home of the poor man, artisan, or mechanic, I would have them all worthy of a home of taste.

— SIDNEY SMITH.

SPIRIT OF THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.

REV. PROF. STOWE delivered on Sunday afternoons, during the last winter, a course of expository lectures, in the church of Rev. Dr. Kirk, of this city. We find one of them reported in full in a late issue of the Chicago "Advance." It is on the subject of demoniacal possession. He explains it in the usual orthodox manner. He believes that for some inscrutable purpose evil spirits, in the time of Christ, had power to enter and torment human bodies; and he regards it as one of the most striking proofs of the divinity of Christ that he "drove out the devils." We give an extract from the introduction of the lecture, premising that we suppose the word *Caleb* is a misprint for *Calef*, the person referred to, no doubt, being the bold and strong-minded merchant, Robert Calef, to whom Boston owes a statue. Prof. Stowe says, —

"To assist your minds in investigating this subject, I make this preliminary statement: that we all believe that the Salem witchcraft was a terrible delusion, a mischievous, calamitous delusion. Now, supposing our Saviour had been on earth then, and lived in Eastern Massachusetts, as he lived in Galilee, and supposing he had always sympathized with Cotton Mather and Stoughton, who believed fully in that delusion, and had never said a word in sympathy with Caleb and John Wise, who looked upon it in its true light, we could have had no confidence in him now; we should say that he gave credence to a delusion. Now if, in his time it was a delusion, it was as terrible then as latterly at Salem. Let us see how he met it then. Did he meet it as the Sadducees did, taking for granted that it was all false, or as true Pharisees, that it was true? There cannot be two opinions about this. Otherwise, we must deny the record, or set Jesus aside as a mischievous impostor. Can we deny the record? I think not; it is perfectly well established. The most important of all the narratives respecting demoniacal possession is that of Gedara. It is regarded by the apostles as of great importance, being given three times, — by Matthew, more minutely by Mark, very minutely by Luke. It embraces many difficulties, is most likely to be abused, and susceptible of all manner of unbelieving objections. Let us see how this matter is set forth in the Scriptures, keeping in mind the Salem witchcraft."

Prof. Stowe then enters upon an examination of the accounts in the Gospels of the casting out of devils, and this is followed by these words:—

“Before uneducated Jews, educated Jews, Gentiles, in his most confidential conversations with his disciples, he never gave the slightest hint that this doctrine which they held was not true. Yet it was one great object of his mission on earth to reveal the truth in regard to the spirit world; and we have no means of knowing except through him; we must depend upon him entirely. Oh! what a cruel deceiver, if on that point he has deceived us! Why in his most confidential conversations, at least, did he not tell us that this was not true!”

We have referred to Prof. Stowe’s lecture, not for the purpose of controverting his view, still less is it our design to attempt any explanation of one of the most difficult problems of biblical criticism. We cannot but think, however, that the allusion to the Salem witchcraft has a point of unfairness which so candid a writer as Prof. Stowe must have overlooked. He supposes Christ to have lived at the time of Cotton Mather and Robert Calef. To use language in a sense different from what it was then understood, would indeed have looked like deception. But suppose Christ to have lived several hundred years *after* that delusion, and, to use the popular language of the day, knowing that the progress of knowledge during these hundred years would give a right interpretation of his words. For example, did Christ live among us now, and should he speak of “the bewitched,” he might well know that our better views of this subject would explain him as meaning those who were accused of witchcraft. Now, the historical fact, we believe, is, that demoniacal possession was not *first* believed in the time of Christ. It is generally held, as we suppose, that the Jews derived their ideas on this subject as far back as the time of the Captivity,—four or five hundred years before the Christian era. Meanwhile, a way of speaking on this subject had become embedded in the popular language which gave a different interpretation to the words from what they had at first. There may have been a time when to speak, without explanation, of “St. Anthony’s fire,” or “St. Vitus’ dance,” would have been deception on the part of one disbelieving the agency of those saints in these diseases; but who would say that the use of those expressions implies any de-

ception now? Is it deception for the astronomer to say the sun *rises* or *sets*? Old forms of words are used after the ideas they expressed have passed away. This fact we think Prof. Stowe has overlooked. It takes away, as it seems to us, all the force of his allusion to the Salem witchcraft. His supposition that Christ lived in the time of Cotton Mather is not a parallel case.

— A carefully elaborated and well-expressed article in the last “Radical,” on “Art and Religion,” suggests many good thoughts, and we select the following:—

“ Art is worthy to be placed by the side of religion for its universal hold upon the hearts of men. Even those stern souls who have sought to crush out this, as every other human feeling, from the heart, how have they revelled in the imagery of the Psalms and the majestic symbolism of the Hebrew Scriptures! They overthrew the cathedrals and statues of Rome, but they painted splendid visions of the glory of the New Jerusalem with their lips: and every deed of the old Hebrews became a symbol and a poem. Out of the stern sect of the Baptists has come that wonderful work of art, which Bunyan called a dream, but which is such a living reality that it charms alike childhood and age. Inspired by his thought, the dreamer soars so high above, and so far beyond the limits of his narrow creed, that the liberal thinker of to-day finds the “Pilgrim’s Progress” a mirror of his own spiritual life. The devotion which art has inspired is second only to that of religion; it has its martyrs whose lives have been joyfully sacrificed to its pursuit, and men have esteemed wealth and pleasure and all other joys of life as nothing in comparison with it. And as religion fills the highest soul, and yet comforts and blesses the humblest, so is it with art; it has a word and a message for all. The rapt connoisseur delights in the symphonies of Beethoven, which seem as if they would still satisfy the soul when it had passed out of mortal bounds, and the pious Methodist feels her spirit borne upward to heaven on the strains of some simple hymn. What has art not been as the companion of religion to the enslaved negroes of the South? The truths of the gospel were darkened to their intellects by ignorance; its precepts of mercy and equality came strangely distorted from their masters’ lips and lives; but the glorious poetry of the Bible kindled their imagination, and while the body writhed under the

lash, and the mind was dwarfed by ignorance, the soul revelled in a glory and grandeur of spiritual insight. The weird music of the spirituals, never rightly sung but by those who had passed through the baptism of great sorrows, was a song of deliverance and victory. One of the most original among these people, known by her well-earned name of Moses, says of all that she has seen since she has come North, nothing has delighted her so much as the statues. Does she not here recognize the kindred spirit which prompted her own heroic deeds, and made the dark nights of waiting in the bush full of light and glory ?

" The claim of art to express the divine in relation would be wholly invalidated, did it fail to meet the great question of theology, the origin of evil, the great moral truth of humanity, growth by suffering, good and evil, joy and grief; both human, both divine. Does art find words for both, and speaking them, does it reveal a reconciliation between them ? Art gives us no explanation, no argument, yet these are her favorite themes, and she does not shrink from painting them broadly and thoroughly. But art always suggests that which makes evil supportable and grief beneficent. It is the terrible jar and shock which dismay us. Art puts the one fact into relation with the all. Could we look with divine eyes, we should see all that is made in harmony, and know that though in isolation it is evil, in relation it is good. We can look upon the statue of the ' Dying Gladiator ' with rapt admiration ; we should have shrunk with horror from the actual scene. But does not the artist show us that it is the gladiator dying ? It is the man living. Tragedy appeals to us as the grandest of all human expressions, because it does not dwarf and cramp this side of human nature, but expresses it fully and awfully, but always with a latent revelation of infinite, divine power, which can illumine it all. Take Hamlet, for instance. How full of horrors ! What wrenching of all human ties ! What meanness and desecration of sacred relations, as well as bolder and greater crimes ! What doubt and irresolution and questioning and inward distraction in Hamlet's mind ! Nothing is softened, no light breaks in at last ; good and bad are alike swept away. Intellectual criticism has exhausted itself upon it. But what is the result ? Are you not ennobled and strengthened by Hamlet ? Does it not charm the multitude in the theatre as much as the scholar in the closet ? and have not Hamlet's very questionings awakened in you a consciousness of eternal security and truth ?

" Like religion, art does not stand appalled at the great mystery of death. Loving manifestation as it does, seeing in the outward the fitting and inevitable garb of the spirit, regarding the body not as the hindrance, but as the helper of the soul, knowing the inward through the outward, and expressing its divinity by humanity, with what horror might it not see the outward beauty wasted, the temple of the body destroyed. Yes, death is a great fact. My friend lives, but all which related him to me, the touch of the hand — the glance of the eye, the thrilling tone of the voice — is gone. Are not these treasures lost in the present, whatever memory and hope may speak of past and future? Death is a great fact, great as sorrow, great as struggle, great as human life, but still divine. Art has her requiem for the departed, mournful, but yet comforting ; she paints the dead Christ, but the beauty of his countenance suggests the risen Saviour. In the form is the life, or rather in the power which makes the form. Nothing has ever seemed to me a more touching illustration of death than the sculptor's process of casting his statue. Over the beautiful clay model, wrought out with so much care, slowly creeps the dull, ugly crust which hides it from sight. A moment more, and that clay so beautiful, so precious, is dug out a shapeless mass and thrown back into the common lump. Another process, and there stands the fair, white statue. It was destroyed that it might be preserved ; it died that it might live. Who ever doubts of immortality, standing by the grave of one dearly loved ? Art so stands by the grave, so represents death, and so reveals its meaning and its beauty. Art cannot see death without seeing more than death. It sees it in its universal relation, as a new possibility of life ; it relates it to the infinite, and this dark shadow is touched by the divine light."

— The next French Revolution is often anticipated. M. de Montalembert has predicted some of its features. We find the following account of his views, with some comment on them, in the " Nation : " —

" He says that the support rendered by the Church to the Imperial *régime* will give the next revolution a character of irreligion which the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 had not. He treats as absurd the supposition that the existing *régime* will not end in revolution, and a revolution, too, compared with which

, the crises of 1830 and 1848 will appear child's play,' and goes on to say 'that the suppression of political life in France has produced in certain strata of French society a development of sensualism, materialism, and even atheism of which the eighteenth century itself offered no example,' and he predicts that one of the first acts of the revolutionists will be the stoppage of the clerical pay from simple detestation of the Church. M. de Montalembert is not a man whose forebodings are to be treated lightly; but he seems to us to fall into an error not unnatural in a man of his opinions and temperament, — an error, too, which a considerable portion of the religious world shares, — of treating the materialism of this age as the same in character with that of the eighteenth century. There is not the least likelihood that we shall ever witness again such an 'explosion of irreligion' as that which accompanied the first revolution, not only because manners are softened, but because the 'irreligionist' of our day feels little of the hatred of the Church which its strength and abuse of power excited in his predecessors of the last century. Moreover, there has been a great change in the manners of the clergy on the Continent, and in the relations of the lower orders of them to their flocks. Those who most contemn their doctrines and office are forced to respect them as philanthropists, and the worst of our modern sensualists has a little of the 'religion of humanity' in him; and, even if he hates the Church, has at least a vague belief in the 'Dieu des bonnes gens.' But it is right to add that many acute observers share M. de Montalembert's forebodings."

— In a late number of the "Independent," Rev. Edward Eggleston gives the following before unpublished incident in the life of President Lincoln. Mr. Eggleston says:—

"A respected townsman and old acquaintance of Mr. Lincoln was the narrator of the story to my informant, and himself a participant. According to that habit of familiarity so prevalent in the West (by means of which a man is made to prolong his boyhood throughout his life), this gentleman is known among old friends by the name of 'Jim,' as Mr. Lincoln was always called 'Abe.' For the sake of my story, I shall have to call Mr. — 'Jim,' as any one of his fellow-citizens would in telling it.

"This gentleman relates that, soon after Mr. Lincoln's Cooper

Institute speech, he saw a notice in the New York 'Tribune' that Hon. A. Lincoln, of Illinois, had delivered an address to the Sunday-school at the Five Points, which was very well received by both teachers and pupils. Knowing that Mr. Lincoln was not a professor of religion, it struck him that it was a good subject for banter ; and so, seizing the paper, he started for 'Old Abe's' office. Bursting into the room impulsively, he was startled to find a stranger in conversation with Mr. Lincoln ; and turned to retrace his steps, when the latter called out, —

“‘ Jim ! what do you want ?’

“‘ Nothing.’

“‘ Yes, you do ; come back.’

“‘ After some entreaty, ‘ Jim ’ approached Mr. Lincoln, and remarked, with a merry twinkle in his eye, —

“‘ Well, Abe, I see you've been making a speech to Sunday-school children. What's the matter ?’

“‘ Sit down, Jim, and I'll tell you all about that.’

“ And with that he put his feet on the stove, and began : —

“ When Sunday morning came, I did not know exactly what to do. Washburne asked me where I was going. I told him I had nowhere to go, and he proposed to take me down to the Five Points Sunday-school, to show me something worth seeing. I was very much interested by what I saw. Presently Mr. Pease came up and spoke to Washburne, who introduced me. Mr. Pease wanted us to speak. Washburne spoke, and then I was urged to speak. I told them I did not know anything about talking to Sunday-schools ; but Mr. Pease said that there were many of them friendless and homeless, and that a few words would do them good. Washburne said I must talk. And so I rose to speak ; but I tell you, Jim, I didn't know what to say. I couldn't talk about Christ and religion, for I didn't know much of either ; but I rememb'ered that Mr. Pease had said that they were homeless and friendless, and I thought of the time when I had been pinched by terrible poverty. And so I told them that I had been poor ; that I remembered when my toes stuck out through broken shoes in the winter ; when my arms were out at the elbows ; when I shivered with the cold. And I told them there was only one rule ; that was, *Always do the very best you can.* I told them that I had always tried to do the best I could ; and that, if they would follow that rule, they would get along somehow. That was about what I said. And when I got through, Mr. Pease

said it was just the thing they needed. And when the school was dismissed, all the teachers came up and shook hands with me, and thanked me for it, though I did not know that I was saying anything of any account. But the next morning I saw my remarks noticed in the papers.'

"Just here Mr. Lincoln put his hand in his pocket, and remarked that he never heard anything that touched him as had the songs which those children sang. With that he drew forth a little book, remarking that they had given him one of the books from which they sang.

"Did you ever hear any poetry like this, Jim?"

"And he began to read a piece, with all the earnestness of his great, earnest soul. In the middle of the second verse his friend 'Jim' 'felt a choking in his throat and a tickling in his nose.' At the beginning of the third verse he saw that the stranger from the East was weeping, and his own tears fell fast. Turning toward Lincoln, who was reading straight on, he saw the great blinding tears in his eyes, so that he could not possibly see the page. He was repeating that little song from memory! How often he had read it, or how long its sweet and simple accents continued to reverberate through his soul, no one can know. How much influence may that little child's song have had in bringing him to that trustful attitude toward God which was so characteristic of him during the weary closing years of his life!"

— A correspondent of the "Nation," writing from London, gives the following account of the present state of the Church of England:—

"The most tangible merits of the Church of England in the popular view are its use as a distributor of charity and as the great support of primary education. Nearly everything that has been done in educating the poor in country districts has been done by the clergy. From small incomes they have often built the schools, and are still their chief support. Their position, however, is threatened as the demand for education rises. It is becoming more evident every day that an effectual school system can no longer be trusted to voluntary efforts, and that we must have recourse to some scheme of rating. Of course, the rate-payers will then claim a share in the management of the schools. Now the difficulty is that the clergy have naturally considered

the schools as a means of forcing the catechism upon the children, and their object has been to drill the country population into a proper respect for the squire and the parson,—especially for the parson,—and of course they will be likely to fight any system which threatens to deprive them of this power and to give Dissenters a voice in the management. They will endeavor, in short, to keep up a strictly denominational system, and to insist upon having their own way as they have had hitherto. If so, they will probably be ousted to a considerable extent from the educational system altogether, and with a proportional loss of influence. The object of the essayists is to implore them to lower their tone, and to be content with permission to teach the Bible, lest they should be allowed to teach nothing at all.

"Undoubtedly, a loss of its educational position would weaken the Church amazingly; but this is at best, or at worst, a distant prospect. It is the really strong point of the Establishment, as Coleridge long ago remarked, that it puts a civilized and educated gentleman in every little country district. The consequence is that whatever laws may be passed, it will long be impossible to dispense with their assistance in the schools in the country districts at least. And the strongest reformers feel that the benefit derived from the Establishment is in this respect so great that it would be dangerous to interfere with it rashly. The Dissenters are for the most a comparatively uncultivated and bigoted generation, divided into petty cliques, and by no means the equals, with all their faults, of the Established clergy. It is rather from within than without that any immediate danger is to be feared. The Church may be said to consist of three parties,—High, Low, and Broad, in ordinary parlance. Now the danger is that these parties are constantly tending to diverge, and, what is more, to pass beyond the limits of the Church. The Low Church party, so far as it is active, has its hold on the lower part of the middle classes; and the most energetic of those classes are apt to be Protestant Dissenters of some school. The Broad Church again consists of the more intellectual clergy; but the class of which they form part is very apt to abandon Church trammels altogether. The thorough-going men of the same type are what Churchmen would call infidels, and, indeed, it is a matter of some wonder how such men as Colenso, or Jowett, or even Dr. Stanley, manage to keep within the necessary limits. It is equally plain that the High Churchmen tend to become Roman

Catholics. The logical position of a man who attributes great authority to the Church, and yet holds that there are half a dozen Churches of authority, is very puzzling to the ordinary mind.

"The consequence of all this is that the real strength of the Church lies in the careless Gallios, the men who prefer to keep things quiet, and prefer compromise to the logical carrying out of their principles. A body which rests upon the *vis inertiae*, upon the conservative indifference of Englishmen, has certainly a good following, and may be carried on for a considerable time by its own momentum. But the weakness of the position is obvious. All the zealots of every party tend first to drag the Church in different directions, so that it is a matter of great difficulty to retain them in due cohesion, and are very apt to get beyond the sacred bounds altogether, and to be transformed from members into antagonists. It is therefore apparent that the position of the Church daily tends to grow weaker; and, in fact, the essayists, from whom I have been quoting, are obliged to confess that their hopes really depend on bringing about a greater unity of faith as a support to the unity of constitution. Whether this is probable or not, and whether the unity is likely to be obtained by the triumph of their principles, your readers can judge as well as I. To me it seems that the tendency of modern theologians is to converge towards two opposite and radically incompatible camps, between which the Church of England is only too likely to meet with the proverbial fate.

"Meanwhile the Ritualist Commission continues to meet and put forth occasional reports. They discuss such weighty points as whether the clergy are to be allowed to have candles on the altars, and, if so, whether they are to be allowed to light them. Their general tendency is to give some additional power to the congregation to put a stop to ceremonies of which they disapprove. Any such legislation can of course but touch the mere outside of the question, and tends to bring into clearer light the extreme difficulty of reconciling the sacerdotal claims of the Ritualists to the theory of a state church. The party which most regrets the contest is perhaps that which admires beyond everything the liberty of an English clergyman. More than the clergyman of any other church, he can say what he likes and feel himself independent of the petty tyranny of a small congregation. But that merit, great as it is, is perhaps purchased too dearly by the stereotyped and inflexible constitution which is the result of state

management. The scandal of private property and salable property in the appointment to many of the best livings is of itself sufficient to be a danger to the Church in more exciting times. And more exciting times are coming."

— Prof. Hitchcock has expressed the following views on the subject of the "Antiquity of Man." We find them quoted in the New York "Independent." They are in striking contrast with some of the narrow views of other orthodox writers:—

"In no respect has there been a greater progress of scientific thought the past few years than in relation to the antiquity of man. Extravagant estimates have been hastily made upon insufficient data; but, rejecting these, there remains still a strong probability of the existence of races allied to the Laplanders and North American Indians, several thousand years anterior to the accepted epoch of the Adamic creation. Indisputable proofs of the contemporaneity of these races with extinct mammoths, lions, and bears have been found in England, France, Spain, Italy, and other European countries, as well as in Mississippi and California in the New World. This fact, when isolated, is indecisive of great or little antiquity; but when its collateral relations are developed, it is found that this contemporaneity continued through a long unbroken period, reminding one of more ancient ones, and that these earlier races were dispossessed of their domains by the invading Noachic nations, and we are compelled to believe that the highest types of mankind were preceded by the aboriginal tribes, inferior to the Canearians in many respects. They are none the less human, with their distinctive mental and moral endowments, while their tendencies may have been no more progressive than those of their living representatives. Some of our theologians may object to any theory which admits of the presence of men upon the globe ten or twelve thousand years ago. But some of the same profession, who objected once to the great age of the world, have been led to acknowledge the correctness of the scientific view, and its consistency with revelation. The same results will follow existing objections: for, though worthy of respect, the present interpretation of the Bible is not inspired. It is the glory of our sacred writings that their lustre is not impaired by the discovery of new truths, — principles not imagined in the early history of the Church, — and that its central doctrine remains unchanged, while system after system of human philosophy has arisen and sunk into oblivion."

— The “Christian Witness,” after alluding to the expansive energies of the Methodist Church, utters itself in the following noble, manly words :—

“ In the mean time, what are the measures which, in our own Church, we are taking to ally ourselves with the great and ever-expanding and advancing future of the American people ? What are we doing ? Discussing matters of petty ecclesiastical police, or pettier ecclesiastical millinery, and canvassing, with ponderous solemnity, the question whether, by altering the Nicene Creed, we cannot lash ourselves, by indissoluble bands to the body of the dead Greek Church, — a church which, of all others, is, by its torpid immobility, the most repugnant to the temper of the American race. Here we stand, on the banks of a great river, turning with sick conservatism from the steamboat and mooring ourselves by the side of the superannuated scow ! Here we are, instead of expanding and liberalizing our system, making it still narrower and more restrictive ; instead of trying to harmonize, proscribing ; instead of trying to liberalize, struggling to make ourselves still more reactionary ; instead of trying to ally ourselves with the American future, doing our best to get up an alliance with a system of all other the most stationary, the most intellectually subtle, and the most practically inert, — of all others the most un-American, — that of the Greek. In the mean time, we are permitting our sister Protestant communions to dash ahead and to seize on the future American heart. It is absurd to talk of the decay of ‘the denominations,’ when the same paper that gives us a sermon declaring this contains a column of statistics showing that ‘the denominations’ have given thirty dollars to their seminaries where we give one ; and that, in their missionary activity and in their popular growth they bear to us the same proportion. And the reason is, that ‘the denominations’ are fastening themselves to the Occidental future, we to the Oriental past. This is a cruel thing for those who believe that our destiny is that of a National Church, whose mission is to be the ecclesiastical organ of the American people. It is a cruel thing to observe, that while other communions are more and more closely nationalizing and expanding and liberalizing themselves, the objects now proposed to our own national council are, whether we cannot, by striking out the ‘filioque’ from the creed, get up a permanent alliance with the dead Greek

Church, and, by passing a few more intolerant and onerous canons, drive off that which, with all its faults, is not the least energetic and liberal section of our own. It will be very easy to do this. It will be very easy by at least a tacit toleration of Ritualism, and by the enactment of reactionary laws, to draw to ourselves all the morbid and ultra-conservative elements which have heretofore been clogging and torpifying the various Protestant communions about us. But in doing so we finally put ourselves out of sympathy with the American people; and we put ourselves in a position in which it is impossible that we should be the American National Church. And thus we forfeit a commission the highest a church ever had; and for which no church, in the prime elements of ministry and liturgy, was ever so well fitted."

THE RICHES OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

THE mind that is wide open, wide awake,
 Is poor on earth, yea, poorer than a child;
 For all the things it knows and sees and loves,
 How will it, can it, cares it to possess!
 And, like the sun, it rides serene in heaven,
 Surveying all, indeed, but craving naught
 Save its own light and heat, and round about
 A world to fling a glad reflection back;
 And a life's destiny to rule over.
 This is the mind called truly *poor in spirit*,
 Not poor of spirit, love, large luminous vision.
 Then tremble not, dear soul! but know thou this:
 The more things leave thee, the more heavenly —
 In compensation — they appear to thee!
 The purelier, therefore, thou becomest man!

—THE LAYMAN'S BREVIARY,

KNOWLEDGE and power, instead of being a substitute for justice, instead of exalting the oppressor, only deepen his guilt and fill the measure of his sin.

C. FOLLEN.

RANDOM READINGS.

"A MAN IN EARNEST."

IT is the title of the "Life of A. H. Conant," * by ROBERT COLLYER, and the privilege of telling Conant's story belonged of right to Collyer. It was just the theme for him to handle, and through him the true-hearted man still speaks. We recall Conant very distinctly as he appeared to us at the Divinity School; but, occupied with our scholasticisms, we did him no justice. It is pleasant now to make even a tardy confession of his worth. The book contains nothing more interesting than the Extracts from the good man's Diary. The line between secular and sacred vanishes altogether here; not because the holy has become profane, but because one light, pure and sweet, illuminates all that is done. We cannot refrain from transferring a few Entries to our Random Readings: —

"Made a plan of a sermon on the Prodigal Son, a pair of quilting frames, and an argument at the Lyceum against capital punishment.

- "Read Neander. Made a chair.
- "Worked on a sermon. Drew straw.
- "Worked on a sermon. Made a partition for the stable.
- "Worked on a sermon and drew wood. Snow two feet deep.
- "Commenced a sermon and worked in the woods.
- "Read Neander. Horse died.
- "Read Neander. Mended a pump.
- "Wrote on a sermon. Read Neander and made a wheelbarrow.
- "Began a sermon. Planted potatoes.
- "Wrote a sermon on Episcopacy. Built an ice house. Read the Methodist Discipline. Helped my wife to wash.
- "Finished sermon and haying," etc., etc.

We should often have been glad to drop Neander for the wheelbarrow, and to turn from the sermon to the haying. As to the "washing," we cannot speak so confidently, being very sure that "the right" to do laundry work is clearly amongst the rights

* Horace B. Fuller, 383 Washington Street.

which a laundress ought never to allow herself to be deprived of. We might consent to put out the clothes-line ; there we think we should make a stand.

We cannot resist this further extract, so commanding the volume very warmly to our readers : —

- “ 21. Went to Elgin with father, to build cupola for the church.
- “ 22. Worked at cupola.
- “ 23. Raised cupola.
- “ 24. Hung the bell.
- “ 25. Preached in the church.
- “ 26. Finished cupola, and went home.”

E.

AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN GREECE.

Mrs. Howe has given us a very *pleasant* “ record of a pleasant journey.”* She writes “ plain,” we write “ pleasant.” We extract the following paragraphs, because it is so good to find a person of “ liberal” sentiments who is not illiberal towards those who hold to the old views in religion. Of the American Missionaries in Greece, she says : —

“ Their merits and demerits I am not here to discuss. How much of polite culture, of sufficient philosophy, goes with their honest purpose, it is not at this time my business to know or to say. Neither is their special theology mine. They believe in a literal atonement, while I believe in the symbolism which makes a pure and blameless sufferer a victim offered in behalf of his enemies. They look for a miraculous, I for a moral, regeneration. [We do not see the antagonism here ; are there no *moral* miracles ? — ED.] They make Christ divine of birth. I make him simply divine of life. Their dogmas would reconcile God to man, mine would only reconcile man to God. Finally, they revere as absolute and divine a book which I hold to be a record of surpassing thoughts and actions, but with the short-comings, omissions, and errors of the human historiographer stamped upon them. With all this diversity of opinion between the Church of this communion and that of mine, I still honor beyond all difference the Protestant cause for which they stand in Greece, and consider their representation a just and genuine one. . . . Whenever I have met a scholar of Mrs. Hill, I have seen the traces of a firm, pure, and gentle hand, one to which the wisest and tenderest of us would willingly confide our daughters.”

E.

* Lee & Shepard.

THE THREE SONS.

I HAVE a son, a little son, a boy just five years old,
With eyes of thoughtful earnestness, and a mind of gentle mould ;
They tell me that unusual grace in all his ways appears,
That my child is wise and grave of heart beyond his childish
years.

I cannot say how this may be : I know his face is fair,
And yet his chiefest comeliness is his sweet and serious air ;
I know his heart is kind and fond, I know he loveth me,
But loveth yet his mother more with grateful fervency.
But that which others most admire is the thought that fills his
mind ;

The food for grave, inquiring speech he everywhere doth find.
Strange questions doth he ask of me when we together walk ;
He scarcely thinks as children think, or talks as children talk,
Nor cares he much for childish sports, — dotes not on bat or ball,
But looks on manhood's ways and works, and aptly mimics all.
His little heart is busy still, and oftentimes perplexed
With thoughts about this world of ours, and thoughts about the
next.

He kneels at his dear mother's knee ; she teaches him to pray,
And strange and sweet and solemn then are the words which
he will say !

Oh ! should my gentle child be spared to manhood's years, like
me,
A holier and a wiser man I trust that he will be !
And when I look into his eyes, and stroke his thoughtful brow,
I dare not think what I should feel, were I to lose him now !

I have a son, a second son, a simple child of three ;
I'll not declare how bright and fair his little features be,
How silver sweet those tones of his when he prattles on my
knee.

I do not think his bright blue eye is like his brother's keen,
Nor his brow so full of childish thought as his hath ever been ;
But his little heart is a fountain pure of kind and gentle feeling,
And every look's a gleam of light, rich depths of love revealing.
When he walks with me, the country folk who pass us in the
street

Will shout for joy, and bless my boy, he looks so mild and sweet !
 A playfellow he is to all, and yet, with cheerful tone,
 Will sing his little song of love, when left to sport alone !
 His presence is like sunshine sent down to gladden earth,
 To comfort us in all our griefs, and sweeten all our mirth.
 Should he grow up to riper years, God grant that he may prove
 As sweet a home for heavenly grace, as now for earthly love.
 And if beside his grave the tears our aching eyes must dim,
 God comfort us for all the love which we shall lose in him !

I have a son, a third sweet son ; his age I cannot tell ;
 For they reckon not by years and months where he has gone to
 dwell.

To us for fourteen anxious months his infant smiles were given,
 And then he bade farewell to earth, and went to live in heaven.
 I cannot tell what form is his, what looks he weareth now,
 Nor guess how bright a glory crowns his shining seraph brow.
 The thoughts that fill his sinless soul, the bliss which he doth
 feel,

Are numbered with the secret things which God will not reveal.
 But I know, for God has told me this, that he is now at rest,
 Where other blessed infants are, on their Saviour's loving breast.
 Whate'er befalls his brethren twain, his bliss can never cease ;
 Their lot may here be grief and fear, but his is certain peace.
 It may be that the tempter's wiles their souls from bliss may
 sever,

But if our own poor faith fail not, he must be ours forever.
 When we think of what our destiny is, and what we still must
 be ;

When we muse on *that* world's perfect bliss, and *this* world's
 misery,
 When we groan beneath this load of sin, and feel this grief and
 pain,
 Oh ! we'd rather lose our other two than have him here again !

— CHILD'S FRIEND.

WOULD we honor the Saviour ? Fair and holy deeds are the
 green branches which we should strew in his way.

C. FOLLEN.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

"I HAVE been forced," said Fletcher, "by many disappointments to look for comfort in nothing but in the comprehensive words, 'Thy will be done.' A few more trials will convince you experimentally of the heavenly balm they contain to sweeten the pains and heal the wounds that crosses and afflictions may cause."

The experience of every Christian who has been afflicted has corresponded to that of Fletcher. To one who is mourning over the loss of his first-born, how far from reaching the case are the topics of consolation often suggested by unskillful friends. All utterly fail till the mourner can say from the heart, "Thy will be done." Then they are not needed. These all-comprehensive words convey all the consolation required.

An aged Christian was deprived of his only son, to whom he had looked for support. A sudden and severe dispensation of Providence took him away, and left the father alone and destitute of the means of support. His case awakened a wide-spread sympathy; for he was a very pious man, and in the days of his strength had labored abundantly in the cause of Christ. Many came to him to express their sympathy, and to suggest topics of consolation. The old man would listen in silence to what they had to say, and would ask his friends to pray with him. One friend attempted to show him that it was for the best that his son should be taken away, and concluded by inquiring, —

"Do you not see it to be so?"

"No," said the old man, "I can't say that I do. All I know is that God has taken him away from me, and if any other being had done it, I never could have been reconciled to it in the world. God has done it, and I think I can say, 'Thy will be done.'"

He had thus placed himself at the fountain-head of consolation, — the spot to which all who are afflicted should repair.

A father lost a most promising and beloved child. Though young in years, there were good grounds to hope that the soul was prepared to dwell with Christ. It was hard to part, however, with the loved one, and it was feared that the sorrow would overpower the strong man. Friends pressed around to offer consolation, rejoicing that they could speak with such confidence respecting the condition of the dear departed one. They told

him how much of sin and sorrow his child had escaped in consequence of her early translation ; of the advantages for education in heaven beneath the Saviour's eye. These remarks, though full of weighty truth, made little or no impression upon his mind. "God," said he, "has done it, and I am content." He had come to the same fountain of consolation. His words were but another for the expression, "Thy will be done."

There is no feeling more precious than that of resignation to the Divine Will. "We often improve more by one hour's resignation," said a man of God, "than by a month's reading." As improvement in spiritual life is the great end of our being, we should not fail to make use of this most important means. We can exercise resignation when we can do nothing else. We may not be able to read God's Word, or to sing his praise, or to minister to the saints, or warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, but we can always exercise resignation. We can always honor God, and draw in abundant consolation by saying from our hearts, "Thy will be done." — EXCHANGE.

THE UNSEEN VISITOR.

I WAS told the other day of an incident which I will relate to my young friends, for it may be to them what it was to me, a hint for the study of an interesting lesson.

A friend upon returning to her home, from which she had been absent some time, was told, that while she was away there came to the house one day a very beautiful and gentle looking lady, who, upon being told that her friend was not at home, and would be absent for a long time, looked very sorrowful, and as if she could not bear to leave the house ; she waited some moments at the door, and then asked if she might be allowed to enter, and be shown the chamber which this friend occupied. This request was granted, and she went in. She was shown up-stairs, and into the chamber where this friend passed the greater part of her time. She looked about upon everything in the room ; upon the table where her friend sat at her writing ; upon the bed where her last waking thoughts gradually changed themselves into visions of the night ; upon the pictures, especially upon that one which showed the features of the friend whose home was now in the bright heavens ; she then opened the closet-door and looked at the dresses which hung up, took hold of them, and sighed that she who wore them was not present. After she had stayed

long enough to note all the objects which her friend's eyes daily rested upon, she went away. When I was told of this incident, I asked whether we should all like to be so visited. Is the chamber we leave in such order that we should be willing that those we best love should come and remain in it, that they may call to mind the dear friend who is absent? Is the closet, that hidden place, so arranged that a friend may open the door and see in it the marks of their friend, seeming still to speak to them as they did when they saw them in the dress which now hangs before them? Suppose for a moment that upon such a visit as our friend made, she should have witnessed, when she entered this silent chamber, the appearance of disorder, confusion, and want of cleanliness; that the closet in which she had hoped to see hung up some well-known dress had disclosed nothing that was agreeable for the eye to rest upon; would she not at such a scene have felt that her friend was indeed far from her, and could not be easily recalled? Would the love which had prompted her to visit the place where her friend dwelt, be satisfied at such proofs of her manner of living? Would she not have felt disappointed at the story that these silent objects would have told her, and have felt that she had been deceived in her?

I wish my young friends to think of this, and ask themselves whether the places they may occupy are in such order, and in such a state, as to give pleasure to the heart of a friend who should come in their absence to sit themselves down in their room, that they may more vividly call to mind the loved one who is away, by looking upon the objects they had left behind them. And I wish them to carry out the idea still farther, and remember that there is always a dear Friend, who is all loveliness and all beauty, who visits us daily and hourly, whether we are in our accustomed homes or away from them; that he has given us a temple to live in, wherein we are so to live as to be ever ready to receive his visits, and more than willing that he should open the door of our most secret places, where he may see how far we are true to ourselves, how far our thoughts correspond to our words, and our words to our actions.

Let every one, young or old, bear in mind, as they place in order the homes which they occupy, that by this act they do something towards keeping in mind the great truth that we are never alone; that the home of our spirits as well as our earthly home should always be in readiness to receive the angel of love.

S. C. C.

THE LONE FORTY.

AN INCIDENT OF CONSECRATION DAY, MAY 30, 1868.*

'TWAS come, — the consecrated day
 A grateful land had set apart,
 On soldiers' graves fond wreaths to lay,
 More touching far than works of art.

In one sequestered, sacred spot,
 Two score of soldiers sweetly slept ;
 The thirty-nine were all forgot,
 The other one a widow wept.

Poor soldier boy? but one of three
 She freely gave to save the land ;
 A martyr he to Liberty,
 And sleepeth now with this brave band.

In sight of that dear flag and dome
 They fiercely fought and nobly fell ;
 For them left sweethearts, wives, and homes,
 And more of love than words can tell.

To this lone spot a mother brave
 Bore forty wreaths, the blooms of May ;
 One for the poor boy's tufty grave,
 One on each soldier's lot to lay.

A woman's heart, in largest love,
 Embraced and consecrated all ;
 Scattered her flow'rs the graves above,
 And silent tears let gently fall.

Wisdom is here, for well she knew
 Where trophies rise and thousands sleep,
 There, to their human instincts true,
 The multitude would rush to weep.

But she — alone — more deeply moved,
 Sought out this sad, forgotten lot,
 And thus a halo round it wreathed,
 Outshining many a nobler spot.

Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

P.

* Forty soldiers fell at Fort Stevens, in defence of Washington, and lie buried seven miles out from the capital.